

November 9, 1972

N. Schmitt, M.D., D.P.H., C.R.C.P.(C)
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Dear Doctor Schmitt:

I regret the long delay in my reply to your letter (and enclosures) of August 25, 1972, but I was quite ill and away from Cincinnati for several weeks in the late winter and early spring of 1972 prior to my return in April and undertaking very little work other than that involved in convalescing while straightening out my accumulations of correspondence, as well as other affairs which suffered in my absence. I went also (by freighter) to Buenos Aires to an International Congress on Occupational Health in August and September, in which I was involved, and this (part of my convalescence) occasioned further delay.

Let me thank you for your letter and the reprints (of which our library and bibliographic staff had taken cognizance). As you are aware, doubtless (I note references in your article), animals have been involved in other smelter areas. Your article has presented the situation of the Trail Smelter clearly and your observations add much to the information in this field. I am particularly glad to note your observations on people which indicate either that people are not involved in the ; regional difficulties to anything like the extent that the animals are, or that they are not affected at all. This is an interesting and important aspect of these situations, which result clearly from the fact that man does not ingest large quantities of grass and other contaminated forage as do the cattle, horses and other herbivora. I have seen, as have others who have investigated situations of this type, children (and adults) living in the midst of these contaminated areas, who absorb very little lead and are unharmed, in an area in which cattle and horses (and in some cases, wild herbivora, as the deer) sicken and die. The grazing animals, especially those which pick up appreciable quantities of soil as they graze, take in large quantities of vegetation (if it is available) and the horses, in particular, because of their manner of grazing, absorb large quantities of lead from their alimentary tracts (the relatively long time of the forage spent in transit within the bodies of the animals results in great absorption from the alimentary tract.

If I were you (and your colleagues), I would not bother much with the gallstones. They are to me a mere incident in the situation - and, a not unexpected incident. However, they have, I think, little physiological or physiologic significance, and although it would be interesting, perhaps, to investigate the matter further, I doubt that it would throw much light on the situation. The behavior of lead in the human body is reasonably clear, so far as intake and output are concerned. (It occurs to me that you might find the Harben lectures of mine to be of interest, and so I send you a reprint; the clothbound copies are all gone, but paperback copies are still available. There are, of course, very many more data than these

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in the literature, but these observations were intended to answer a number of questions which I could not answer - for myself - in any other way, and they have been put together in such a way as either to answer questions, or to show that some of them cannot be answered except by further or^a different type of study.)

I am not suggesting that we might be able to answer any question which you might raise, but if you have other questions, I should be glad to try to visualize the answers.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.
Professor Emeritus of
Occupational Medicine

RAK:wb