

THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF HYGIENE AND PUBLIC HEALTH
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MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSIOLOGICAL HYGIENE

June 13, 1949

Dr. Robert Kehoe
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Cincinnati 19, Ohio

Dr. Dr. Kehoe:

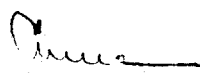
The Medical Department has a case of severe porphyrinuria (uroporphyrins) in the hospital at present about which they would like your opinion. The man has worked for the past four years at a gasoline service station where he handled tetraethyl lead and batteries. Previous to this he had worked at the American Smelting and Refining Company. While at the latter company he had his first attack of illness and during the past four years he has had other attacks. The patient is not mentally clear but the doctor believes the attacks may be similar to his present illness. He came to our hospital through the Psychiatric Clinic to which he was referred because of the CNS symptoms. Here they suspected that he was suffering from porphyrinuria and transferred him to the medical ward. In addition to the CNS symptoms including mental changes, coma, he also has hypertension, abdominal pain and vomiting, loss of reflexes and sensory changes. The urine turns to a deep red color, the change being quite rapid in the sun.

The doctor in charge of the case would like to know if you think this could be related to the tetraethyl lead which he has been dispensing at the gas station. No stippled cells have been found and the blood lead determination has not yet been received. The only reason for suspecting that lead might be a factor is that increased porphyrins have been reported in cases of lead poisoning.

The doctor asked me to write to you to see if you thought the man's occupation might be related to his condition.

Thanks for any help you can give us.

Sincerely yours,


Anna M. Baetjer, Sc. D.
Assistant Professor
Physiological Hygiene