

February 14, 1951

Dr. Robert H. Kotte
1710 Madison Road
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Doctor Kotte:

I am sending you herewith some data extracted from our records gathered over the years, beginning with 1928 and running through 1950. The information is not as complete as I would like, but it would take a great deal of time and study to comb the additional information in a precise manner. I have not had anybody who has had the time to go back to the hospital records and dig up the detailed information. What we have are the notes provided for us by physicians, members of the resident and house staff of the several hospitals involved, plus notations made by one or the other of us in telephone conversations. As you look over these data you will be struck by the fact that there have been a number of years that have yielded no cases and no information. For obvious reasons I should not want to be quoted too extensively in this regard, but I think there is very little question as to what is the answer. By reason of the changes in the personnel of hospital staffs, this problem has received much, little or no attention from year to year. You will note, for example, in the years from 1941 to 1946 we had only one case reported to us or brought to our attention. There is very little question in my mind that this was the result of preoccupation with other matters during this period. In later years we had three cases in 1948, six in 1949 and twelve in 1950. One might draw the conclusion that there has been an increase in the number of such cases in the population. This, I doubt very much. The same causes which were active in bringing about cases in 1950 were certainly active in the previous years. There is nothing really new in the situation. It only illustrates the fact that when the doctors in the community are on the alert, and are looking for cases of a certain type, they may well be found.

The history of pica which runs throughout this series of cases is, in my mind, not to be taken too seriously. Anyone who has read any of the literature on this subject in relation to children, will realize that pica is spoken of regularly as^a part of the background. Thus reference to this is very likely to be made in the history, without very much comment as to its degree. After all the relevance of this history is a matter of degree only, since practically all children put their hands and everything else they can find in their mouths during certain periods in their early life. The problem, therefore, is not so much that these children chew things, but that there are things in their immediate environment which offer opportunities to yield considerable quantities of lead. A careful study

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of the histories of these children might give some useful information.

The above is particularly true with reference to the specific sources of lead absorption. All too frequently no attempt is made to examine carefully into the household of the child to find the exact source of his lead intake. Most of the hospital records make assumptions on this point without giving the precise information that is necessary. We have here precisely the problem that occurs in industry. Unless one goes to the source of the accident or injury, he does not know precisely what happened. Therefore, I am quite sure that in this matter we are making guesses, which may be approximately correct in a fair number of cases, but which in the specific instance are based on inadequate information.

I trust that this information will be of use to you, and certainly if I can be of any assistance to your committee, please do not hesitate to call upon me. I am particularly interested in seeing to it that the booklet that is issued has wise and practical information which can readily be followed in the household.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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Cases of Lead Poisoning in Children Recorded
by The Kettering Laboratory by Years

(No cases recorded during the years omitted)

Year	Number of Cases	Number of Fatalities	Confirmed by Analytical Data	
			On Blood and Urine	On Tissue
1928	2		2	
1931	1		1	
1932	1	1		1
1933	1	1		1
1934	4	1	3	1
1935	5	2	3	2
1936	2		2	
1937	4	1	4	
1938	3	1	3	
1939	5		5	
1940	5	1	5	
1943	1		1	
1945	2	1	1	1
1947	2	1	1	1
1948	3		3	
1949	6	3	5	3
1950	12	4	8	4
All Years	59	17	47	14

Comments:

1. The histories of exposure as supplied were ill defined in most instances. The full case records may have been more informative. These were not investigated at this time. Paint from toys, furniture, woodwork in house, porch railings and unspecified sources was incriminated sometimes by implication only, in 16 cases; battery casings used as household fuel were implicated in 2 cases; metallic lead toys were involved in 2 instances, one of which was fatal, and a lead nipple shield was convicted in 1 case.

2. Pica was alleged as a factor in 22 cases.

3. Three of this series of cases occurred at considerable distances from Cincinnati (Philadelphia, Louisville and Cincinnati), the remainder being from Cincinnati or its environs.