

File
Lead Industries Association
June 24, 1955

Mr. Manfred Bowditch
Lead Industries Association
420 Lexington Avenue
New York City 17

Dear Manfred:

As you well know, I am most sympathetic toward investigations that offer promise of elucidating the mechanism (or mechanisms) whereby lead exerts its effects in the animal organism, and no one, perhaps, more than I realizes the dearth of our information on this important aspect of the problem of lead poisoning. From the aspect of the advancement of our knowledge, therefore, the proposal of your anonymous investigator is intriguing. Moreover, this may well be the way, in principle, toward a better and more effective therapy of the disease, which, despite the promise of EDTA, would be a welcome addition to our armamentarium.

With these matters in mind, I tend to favor any plan of investigation that moves in this direction if it is based on the examination of a specific mechanism. The outcome of such an investigation is entirely unpredictable, I have noted the comments of Norton Nelson and Dr. Chisholm, and both are pertinent. The real question is for you and your associates to answer. Can you afford to embark upon a fundamental investigation of this type, or is it necessary or advisable that you spend your funds in a way that is more likely to yield certain more immediate and tangible returns? If you can answer the first part of my double-barreled question in the affirmative, you had better look into the background and the facilities available to your prospective investigator. If he has had experience in this direction, and if he has people around him who can help him (not with their hands but with their critical judgment), you may not be taking too much risk, for even a negative answer will be useful. I doubt, however, if you would do well to take a flyer in which the factor of inexperience looms fairly large. Enthusiasm is important, but it does not, of itself, accomplish the purposes of sustained research. If I were in your place, I should wish to back some long-term systematic investigation of this general problem, rather than to engage in the support of bits and pieces in the hope of hitting the jack-pot. If then, along with a sober and sound program of investigation, you wish to invest a limited sum in a bit of deliberate wild-catting, you can do so in all good conscience.

Since I do not have much of an idea of the sums of money which are available to you for such investigations or of the policies that apply in such matters, my

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remarks may or may not be pertinent. However, I have done the best I can to advise you, both as to this specific proposal and the more general aspects of the investigative approach.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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