

YALE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

SECTION OF  
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

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May 7, 1954

R. Emmet Kelly, M.D.  
Medical Director  
Monsanto Chemical Company  
St. Louis 4, Missouri

Dear Doctor Kelly:

Thanks for your letter of April 28th. Our observations of chloraene (mostly quite mild) were confusing to me too. That was one reason for publishing the data, since there is a tendency among all of us to assume that certain conditions can be characterized as "safe" on the basis of environmental studies alone. None of us here (including the State Health Department Survey people) have any good answer to why the air samples were so low. We assume that somehow other conditions may have existed for a few weeks or months prior to the recognition of chloraene.

Organic acid A did not contain chlorine, nor did anything else in the particular building. However, the product may have played a part, although by itself it acts only as an irritant (it is packaged as a powder). The Arochlor was from one of the large suppliers and was a combination of high boiling chlorinated hydrocarbons. Since the repairs on the circulating system there have been no more cases - over a three year period.

My conclusion is that chlorinated hydrocarbons should ultimately be judged as safe or hazardous in relation to observations of workers themselves. Study of the environment would seem at best to be only a guide.

One of our purposes was to stimulate interest in occupational medicine. I hope the article will not cause a rash of claims. It seemed to us that the diagnosis of chloraene was so specific that any competent dermatologist could make it. Therefore, disputed cases should not be frequent. On the other hand, if even mild chloraene is occurring, management representatives would want their doctors to be alert to it, as it would seem to be a preventable condition.

Finally, I am not suggesting that the M.A.C. for Arochlor has been set too high. It will take years of observation and experience to determine this. Our "outbreak" may have been an isolated experience not likely to be duplicated. In that connection, it would be helpful and informative if you could publish your experience on exposures over long periods to these substances. We need many more reports to have a basis for sound judgement.

MONS 089296

With best regards to you and Elmer Wheeler.

Sincerely yours,  
*Walter Hays*  
W. Hays, M.D.  
Associate Professor of

JW:mfa