

September 24, 1934

Dr. Henry L. Price
312 Colton Building
Toledo, Ohio

Dear Dr. Price:

Your letter addressed to the Ethyl Corporation has been referred to me for reply.

Unfortunately the matter of making a diagnosis of lead poisoning is not quite as simple as has been suggested to you. The methods which I and my associates make use of are not especially unique, but they are probably somewhat more precise in their application. They depend upon obtaining evidence that a significant absorption of lead has occurred.

There are two points which are useful in this connection: (1) Certain more or less characteristic changes in the blood. Here we have found that a careful examination of blood smears permits us to make a semi-quantitative estimation of the number of stippled cells, and that the number bears some relation to the amount of lead absorption where other factors can be excluded. (2) Specific information is dependent upon the analysis of the blood and the excreta of the suspected case in order to determine whether the quantities of lead absorbed are definitely above the normal figure.

The microscopic blood examinations are simple and if you are interested in the precise technique which we use, I shall be glad to send it to you. The examination of blood and excreta for lead, on the other hand, is by no means simple since the procedures require the utmost in precision and require laboratory facilities which are not generally available. If you are interested in knowing the methods of lead analysis, I should be glad to provide you with a complete description of our technique. However, unless you have available a very well equipped laboratory, the methods will be of little practical use to you.

I shall be glad to hear from you further and to supply you with any detailed information which you consider likely to be useful to you.

Very truly yours,

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Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

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