

THE SOMERSET HOSPITAL
REHILL AVENUE
SOMERVILLE, N. J.

JUNE 6, 1958

DR. ROBERT A. KEHOE
THE KETTERING LABORATORY
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
CINCINNATI 19, OHIO

DEAR DR. KEHOE:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER OF JUNE 2ND. I AM INDEED SORRY FOR THE MIX UP.

THE BLOOD SENT TO YOU IS FROM A PATIENT OF DR. ARTHUR SULLIVAN OF BOUND BROOK, A 14 MONTH OLD CHILD WITH NO COMPLAINTS, AND APPARENTLY NOT ILL, WHO HAD X-RAYS TAKEN FOR GENU VALGUS. THESE SHOWED EXTREMELY DENSE EPIPHYSEAL LINES, WHICH WERE ALSO PRESENT IN OTHER EXTREMITIES. THE RADIOLOGISTS SUGGESTED LEAD POISONING. BLOOD SMEARS SHOWED A VERY MILD DEGREE OF BASOPHILIC STIPPLING. THERE IS NO HISTORY OF EXPOSURE TO LEAD OR PICA; THE FATHER USED TO BE A GAS STATION ATTENDANT A FEW MONTHS BACK.

DR. SULLIVAN REQUESTED US TO CONFIRM THE DIAGNOSIS. I DID NOT FEEL THAT ANY LEAD DETERMINATION WE WOULD DO WOULD BE ACCURATE, AND SUGGESTED A SEARCH THROUGH THE LOCAL INDUSTRIES FOR AN IGNITION SPECTROGRAPHER WHO MIGHT HELP HIM. HE WAS REFERRED TO YOU, AND REQUESTED THAT WE SEND YOU A BLOOD SAMPLE.

WE WILL BE HAPPY TO SEND YOU A SPECIMEN IN YOUR CONTAINERS. OUR SPECIMEN WAS TAKEN USING THE ROUTINE TECHNIQUE FOR BLOOD SEROLOGY, WITH NO PRECAUTIONS FOR LEAD FREE SYRINGES OR CONTAINERS.

WITH APPRECIATION,


A.P. GEWANTER, M.D.
PATHOLOGIST

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June 2, 1958

Dr. A.P. Gewanter
Pathologist
The Somerset Hospital
Redhill Avenue
Somerville, N.J.

Dear Doctor Gewanter:

I regret very much to have to tell you that I cannot accept for analysis for lead any samples of blood that have not been collected in our containers by methods which we prescribe - unless of course, we can be sure that the containers and the methods of collection are above reproach. Quite apart from certain professional responsibilities and policies of this research Laboratory, which I shall not belabor, the opportunities for the contamination of blood by syringes, needles and various containers, are so numerous as it make it quite impossible to trust the analytical findings unless the most meticulous care is taken in their collection.

It is unfortunate for your patient that you obtained and sent samples which have just arrived without getting in touch with me. I can't imagine why anyone who may have told you of our willingness to carry out analyses of this type, failed to inform you of this essential requirement. In any case, since incorrect analytical results are worse than none, I shall hold the samples until I hear from you further.

It is barely possible, of course, that the samples of blood have not been contaminated significantly with lead. If you will give me a detailed account of the manner of their collection, we might take a chance on them, and if their lead content is found to be within the normal range no mistake will have been made. If however, they were found to be high in lead, we should have to obtain samples in our containers to check their significance. Thus it is inadvisable for us to do anything about them at this time, and I advise you against having anyone less scrupulous serve you in this matter.

If you wish, and if it is not too late to obtain samples, I can send the necessary containers to you with the instructions for their use, and with a report form on which to record certain necessary items of information. The proper interpretation of any result depends upon certain items of information, and in the case of a child one must know at least the probable date of

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Dr, A.P. Gewanter -(2)- June 2. 1958

the last period of exposure to lead (e.g. when the child was removed from the potentially dangerous environment of his home), and the nature and duration (precise dates) of any therapy that may have been given prior to the collection of the samples.

If you should be in a hurry for results wire me to send the containers, thereby saving some time.

Cordially yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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