

Metal-Poisoned Child May Be Deaf, Not Retarded Doc Hints

An experimental psychologist at Jefferson Medical College studying the effects of metal poisoning on hearing says he suspects that some children termed mentally retarded might not be retarded at all.

"Some of these children

might just be deaf and the deafness could have come about through lead or mercury poisoning," says Dr. Chester R. Wilpizeski.

"For a child to learn to talk, he must be able to hear. If his verbal development is behind schedule, he is sometimes termed retarded. But suppose he's deaf?"

DR. WILPIZESKI said ghetto children are most susceptible to lead poisoning because they tend to chew on window sills and base boards painted with cheap leaded paints. Mercury poisoning could become an increasing threat through inadequate disposal of industrial waste.

"Also brain damage and sometimes death are caused when large amounts of mer-

cury are consumed in seafood," Dr. Wilpizeski said.

He says he doesn't believe that the lead in the atmosphere is a danger, however.

"I'm primarily interested in the effect on hearing, but that's only part of the general effect of these poisons on the nervous system.

"We live with this stuff," he said. "We must learn as much about it as we can."

Dr. Wilpizeski said there have been no scientific studies on the effects of internal deposits of lead and mercury poisoning on the sensory nerves.

"That's what our study is all about," he says.

HE IS AT THE midway point of a three-year study under a grant by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.

"We've been feeding red monkeys," he said. "This summer we'll feed them mercury. We measured the hearing and equilibrium levels of the monkeys before the tests started to compare the normal levels as the tests progress."

"Right now, we've reached no conclusions. We're still collecting data, day by day."

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The Evening Bulletin

Child Poisoned

Landlord Judge Backs Owner on Lead Paint

By GUNTER DAVID

Of The Bulletin Staff

Philadelphia Common Pleas Judge Ned L. Hirsh, hearing a lead paint case, expressed sympathy with the defendant landlord yesterday because, he said, he himself is a landlord.

The case concerned a request by the city for a court order to get rid of lead paint on walls in an apartment at 1865 N. 24th st., where a child was poisoned last October.

Judge Hirsh refused to grant the city's request on grounds that the child, Lamont Roach, 2, no longer lives in the apartment. The child was diagnosed as suffering from lead poisoning following laboratory tests by the city's Department of Health.

The judge suggested, instead, that the tenant, Mrs. Viola Roach, the child's grandmother, sign an affidavit promising that no children will be permitted into the apartment. The city refused the judge's suggestion. Mrs. Roach was not in court.

According to persons in the court, Judge Hirsh said he owned more than 120 apartment units and could see no sense in putting the landlord, David M. Goldberg, of 1433 Girard ave., to the expense of

getting rid of the lead paint.

The city health code permits no lead paint on walls because small children could be poisoned by licking the paint.

"I was only kidding when I said I owned 120 apartment units," Judge Hirsh told The Bulletin yesterday afternoon.

"I own several commercial properties and one apartment house in the 1800 block of Spruce st. It contains six apartments and the leases have a clause that rental is only for single people. My son lives in one of the apartments, and there are no children in the building."

He said the building is 50 to 60 years old, and that he has owned it for about 25 years.

Asked if the walls contain lead paint, he said, "I don't know. But it doesn't matter because there are no children in the building."

A Health Department spokesman said yesterday that the presence or absence of children in an apartment with lead-painted walls makes no difference as far as the health code regarding lead poison is concerned.

Judge Hirsh subsequently agreed to a proposal by the city to issue a court order to the landlord, prohibiting children under the age of six in the apartment.

Lead Paint Grants

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has been so concerned about eliminating lead-based paint hazards in old houses — the problem stalled almost all FHA-insured mortgages in Philadelphia until a compromise was reached recently — that it has given three research grants totaling \$854,099 to firms that will try to find the most efficient way to remove the paint.

AUG 18 1974 Phila. Gets \$1.1 Million For Lead Poison Tests

Philadelphia has received a \$1,163,600 grant from the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare to continue a program of testing children for lead poisoning.

The Childhood Lead Poisoning Control Project, now in its third year, tests children from one to 6 years old in high-risk areas and provides treatment for those with a lead count of 40 micrograms or more in their blood.

Film Lecture Set On Lead Poisoning

An instructional film and lecture on the detection and control of lead poisoning will be shown Wednesday at 7 P. M. at the Paschall Children's Center and Social Services, 7212 Woodland ave., Southwest Philadelphia.

The following Wednesday, Oct. 30, a mobile unit from City Health Unit No. 3 will be stationed at the Philadelphia Housing Authority's management office at the same address for the testing of children for lead poisoning.

The Paschall Apartments, which are operated by the Philadelphia Housing Authority, were adjudged free of any lead paint hazard during an extensive examination last April.

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