

November 9, 1950

Dr. L. J. Kaasa,
Midland Hospital Association,
4005 Sturgeon Road,
Midland, Michigan.

Dear Doctor Kaasa:

There has been sound information available for a long time on the ability of lead to reach the fetus by way of the placenta. Much of this has derived from animal experimentation, and it is so well established that few persons of experience would feel it necessary to remark on it further. Still births have not been reported in any considerable number, with satisfactory evidence of their etiology, and I know of no reports of cases of the type you have referred to, in which illness of this type resulted in death after delivery. There may have been such reports, but I am not familiar with them off hand.

I am somewhat interested, and perhaps even a bit concerned by the manner in which the diagnosis of plumbism is made in the four months old child, at necropsy or elsewhere. How does one know that this was lead poisoning? If you are to prove that lead was absorbed in significant amounts, you will require analytical evidence. Is such evidence available? If not, and if any material remains, we could assist you in investigating this phase of the matter. I should doubt the wisdom of publishing the case report without such evidence, since questions will be asked along this line, and since proof is so readily obtained that the failure to obtain and present it will be severely criticized.

I should be glad to have any further comments on the case, with special reference to differential diagnosis, that you may care to give. If I can be of further assistance, please let me know.

Cordially yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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Dictated but not read.