THE HOSPITAL OF THE ROCKEFELLER INSTITUTE
FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH
66TH STREET AND YORK AVENUE, NEW YORK 21, N. Y.

27 August 52

Dear Dr Hsboe,

If I might, I'd like to impose on you to the extent of asking a few questions about lead poisoning. I have been reviewing the medical literature on a number of subjects and in a somewhat devious way have become interested in the toxic effects of lead. The reason for this review is preparation for a research problem on lipid metabolism and my interest in lead arises from the reported rapid breakdown of tetraethyl lead to some undetermined combination of lead and phosphorous. The relationship of ~~extra~~ this exchange of ethyl groups for phosphorous compounds to other processes in intermediary metabolism that occur

KE 0019923

of serum which are in some way tied up with this process in normal metabolism, and it might be that the intermediary metabolism of lead would shed some light on the subject.

However, my review of the literature to date leads me to the conclusion that this is not possible because:-

1) The composition of lead circulating in the blood is as yet undetermined.

2) The serum fraction, and the fraction of the erythrocytes which transport lead are also unknown.

3) It is impossible to determine whether lead present in the circulation comes from lead deposits already present in the body, ingested lead of some type other than tetraethyl, or tetraethyl lead, except by ruling out recent exposure.

THE HOSPITAL OF THE ROCKEFELLER INSTITUTE
FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH
66TH STREET AND YORK AVENUE, NEW YORK 21, N. Y.

Also I gather from my reading that lead poisoning is still a major occupational hazard in spite of extensive efforts to control it, and that a technique which would allow one to determine the state of circulating lead might be a worthwhile thing in the diagnosis and control of lead intoxication.

I'm writing to you to confirm these impressions because the library here does not have all the literature on toxicology and I have a feeling that I may have missed some important work on the subject, particularly if it is recently published. Also if there is work being done on the intermediary metabolism of lead, I'd like to know who is doing it in order to watch for their work when it appears.

KE 0019925

THE HOSPITAL OF THE ROCKEFELLER INSTITUTE
FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH
66TH STREET AND YORK AVENUE, NEW YORK 21, N.Y.

I hope that I haven't asked so many questions that answering them will inconvenience you. This is a somewhat devious line of reasoning I admit, but it pursued it might lead to some useful knowledge.

Sincerely,

David Blankenhorn

KE 0019926