

January 21, 1954

Mr. Zola D. Jacobs
Superintendent of Schools
Findlay City Schools
Findlay, Ohio

Dear Mr. Jacobs:

I am sorry that it has not been possible to reply earlier to your letter of December 29. I was out of town when it came, however, and since my return I've been unable to get at more than the most urgent items of the day's work and of correspondence.

I have considered the incident described in your letter and the illness of the custodian in that relationship, and have asked one of my associates to comment on the matter out of his extensive knowledge of the subject. We think it quite unlikely that the illness had any relationship to the use of the spray. Certainly Methoxychlor is regarded as one of the least dangerous, potentially, of the insecticidal materials, being even less toxic than DDT. The other ingredients of the spray have been used extensively and would not be expected to give rise to harm. The Allethrins, for example, have been used in such sprays after approval by governmental authorities.

Of course, there are few substances that are not capable of causing bizarre allergic responses on the part of certain highly susceptible persons, but the exposure in this instance seems to have been very slight, and the probabilities are against this interpretation of the situation. I should think it much more likely that the use of the spray was coincident with the onset of an upper respiratory infection or viral disease, and that this coincidence gave the appearance of a cause and effect relationship.

Doctor Wiseley could, of course, test the reaction of the custodian's sensitivity to the material by brief and cautious application of a small quantity of the diluted material to the mucous membrane of his throat, observing the outcome carefully. He may not consider this either necessary or wise, but such tests of "sensitivity" have been made by others at times, and have sometimes been helpful.

Cordially yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

N 6084

FINDLAY CITY SCHOOLS

FINDLAY, OHIO

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SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

December 29, 1953

To Dr. Heynott
Will you comment, as you
choose reply to the letter
Refer to Dr. V. V. V. V. V.
and
RHK

Dr. Robert Kehoe
School of Medicine
University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Dr. Kehoe:

A custodian in one of our schools was affected with sore throat, irritation of the nose, and fever immediately after using fly spray. He is a patient of Dr. Frank M. Wiseley, and in exploring all possible causes for the illness, Dr. Wiseley has suggested that we write to you to determine whether or not the fly spray might be the cause of the illness.

This custodian on the day he became ill had sprayed two toilet rooms giving two or three "squirts" at each window. It took no more than three or four minutes. He then went downstairs to eat his lunch and already his throat had become so sore he could barely swallow and he noticed an irritation of the nose. Also, there was indication that he had some temperature. The fever lasted four days and his speech is still affected by a slight paralysis.

The fly spray we are using is "Done Died" and is manufactured by the Huntington Laboratories, Inc., of Huntington, Indiana. According to the label, it contains the following ingredients:

Active Ingredients 100%-Petroleum Distillate, N-octyl Bicycloheptene Dicarboximide, Technical Methoxychlor*, Allethrin (Allyl Homolog of Cinerin 1)

*Consists of 2,2 bis (P-methoxyphenyl) 1,1, 1-Trichloroethane and other Isomers and Reaction Products.

We are interested in knowing if any of these ingredients or combination of ingredients could cause this illness. A report from you will be genuinely appreciated by us as well as Dr. Wiseley.

N 6084.01

Very truly yours,

Zola D. Jacobs
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Jacobs
Superintendent of Schools

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ZDJ:f

Methoxychlor is regarded as even less toxic than DDT.

allergic.
bizarre responses to brief contact on the part of certain rare hypersensitive persons. The exposure seems very slight. One might ask whether any reaction like this has occurred to any other parent or who many have used the spray. Upper respiratory infections are quite common at this season and if they are first noted following an exposure to a fly spray may lead the patient to suspect a causal relation of the spraying to the onset of illness.