

October 11, 1938

Dr. Byron D. Bowen
Buffalo General Hospital
100 High Street
Buffalo, New York

Dear Doctor Bowen:--

I have just had a telephone call from Mr. Jenkins of the Harrison Radiator Division of the General Motors Corporation at Lockport concerning the case which we discussed in Buffalo some days ago. It would seem from Mr. Jenkins' information that there is some doubt among your associates as to the adequacy of the means which I proposed for settling the questions at issue in this case. I had supposed that the published work of this laboratory on the clinical problems associated with lead exposure and lead absorption, and the professional position occupied by myself and several of my colleagues in this field were sufficient to justify the implications of honesty and expertness associated with my suggestion. Since that seems not to be the case, I hasten to express my willingness to settle the problem by some method entirely satisfactory to you. I do this because it seems wise for medical men to solve such a clinical problem among themselves.

I have advised Mr. Jenkins that certain additional samples of blood and urine should be obtained from the patient, following the precautions against contamination of the samples that I have previously outlined. I am willing to split the urine samples after they arrive here with anyone whose work we can mutually agree upon as satisfactory. I know, for example, by the experience of exchanging samples, that the results of Willoughby, of Clifford and Wichmann, and of one of Prescott's associates at M.I.T., of Cowgill at Yale, and of Homer Calvery, can be trusted. (You can find out, if you choose, from any of these men as to the probable reliability of our work.) In splitting samples of urine for lead analyses, it is necessary to exercise the utmost precaution against contamination as well as unequal distribution of the lead. The existence of any sediment or suspended material in the sample makes it impossible to split the untreated sample into equal parts with respect to lead content. It is for these reasons that I urge the advisability of our handling the samples.

I am also willing, of course, to study the patient in this laboratory, as I previously suggested, and to supply to you the results of our study and the full details of our procedure. I should be glad to retain aliquots of all samples for such disposition as would enable you to satisfy yourself as to the accuracy of our results. However I understand from Mr. Jenkins that the patient does not wish to make the trip to Cincinnati.

Above all I wish to avoid the unsatisfactory situation which arises from a public disagreement among professional men, with respect to the facts. For this reason I shall make every effort to meet any suggestion which you may offer for settling our differences. If I have appeared to be guilty of presuming too much upon my experience and knowledge in this somewhat specialized field of clinical medicine, I trust you will not think that my attitude springs from a lack of personal or professional respect and courtesy. I should be glad to have the opportunity to demonstrate that such is not the case.

Cordially yours,

RAK:is

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.