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DIRECTOR OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

November 7, 1966

To: All Members of the Lead Health and Safety Committee

Attached for your information is the press release which was sent out on the occasion of the Goldwater-Hoover paper in San Francisco on November 1st, plus a copy of the press coverage from the San Francisco Examiner of that date.

We do not have copies of the paper, since it has not been produced in its final form for publication. As soon as the paper is available, we will have copies for you.

Very truly yours,

Don G. Fowler
Don G. Fowler

DGF:sv
2 encls.



Lead Ahead with Lead

NEWS RELEASE

Columbia University
School of Public Health and Administrative Medicine
600 West 168th Street
New York, N. Y. 10032
(Prof. Leonard J. Goldwater)
Telephone: (212) 579-3933

Release After 9 A.M., Tuesday, November 1.

**NEW GUINEA NATIVES SHOW LEAD LEVELS
COMPARABLE TO INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES**

A 16-country study of "normal" values of lead in human blood and urine shows no significant changes over the past three decades. Lead levels found among New Guinea aborigines, living far from industrialization, are comparable with those obtained in industrialized countries.

This was reported at an American Public Health Association meeting on "Evaluating Health Effects of Air Pollution" in San Francisco Tuesday, November 1, by Dr. Leonard J. Goldwater, Professor of Occupational Medicine, and Dr. A. Walter Hoover, both of Columbia University's School of Public Health and Administrative Medicine. Dr. Goldwater served as chairman of a special World Health Organization task force that evaluated results of an international study which included lead measurements in the human body.

These studies do not support the contention, the doctors said, that increased burning of gasoline and wider use of lead in industry are causing additional exposures to lead in our environment. "No significant change in lead levels of the blood and urine in the last three decades have been shown," they reported.

(more)

- 2 -

The data presented included lead measurements from New Guinea natives "living in the hills of New Guinea, away from industrialization and motorization," the report said, and they had "blood lead levels higher in range than either urban or rural Californians." The mean or average lead level in the blood of these aborigines was higher than that of samples from 12 other places, including California and Ohio, and was the same as those from New York City.

The scientists said the study checked for "normal" values among people who had no evident occupational, medicinal, or other unusual sources of exposure. All samples were analyzed by a uniform method (dithizone) in order to eliminate variance which had been previously noted in some measuring techniques.

Values of blood and urine levels of lead are considered indicators of body burdens of lead. The study found that among the total population, 99% had less than 65 micrograms of lead per liter of urine and more than 98% had less than 50 micrograms per 100 milliliters of blood. The data suggested that the "normal" levels for lead in the urine range from 20 to 65 micrograms per liter and for lead in the blood, the "normal" values range from 15 to 40 micrograms per 100 milliliters.

"It is a well known fact that a certain amount of lead enters the human body daily, mostly by ingestion and inhalation. Most of this amount is excreted in the feces without being absorbed into the blood stream. Ingestion of lead compounds in food and drinking water and other beverages contributes most of the daily lead intake. The air also contributes to intake (by inhalation), although to a considerably lesser degree than by ingestion."

HHH

Tue., Nov. 1, 1966 *Star* B-3, 11-12-13 Page 13

2 Health Researchers Hit 'Poisoned Air' Theory

By WILLIAM BOQUIST

San Antonio Business Editor

A pair of Columbia University physicians suggested today that there is no appreciable contamination of the air we breathe due to lead-containing gasoline or other industrial lead products.

Thus they joined a controversial issue raised recently by a California Institute of Technology geochemist who believes that Americans, particularly, and possibly other industrial cultures may be exposed to unsuspected lead poisoning and early death.

Doctors Leonard J. Goldwater and A. Walter Hoover, of Columbia's School of Public Health and Administrative Medicine, told the American Public Health Association that there does not appear to be the hazard to health suggested by Cal-Tech's Clair Patterson.

The Columbia team took part in a 15-country survey of normal levels of lead in human blood and urine over the last three decades.

ABORIGINES

They found that aboriginal New Guinea natives, living far from industrial plants or motorcars, have higher blood lead concentrations than the residents of California or Ohio, which are among the heaviest of automobile-choked states.

New Guinea blood lead levels were higher than in 10 other locales cited in the study, and matched New York City.

Lead is commonly taken into the body in tiny amounts; most of it is excreted, but small quantities are retained. "Normal" levels of blood and urine lead content have traditionally been set at

figures that seem to represent no hazard to human health.

'SAFE' LEVELS

These theoretically safe levels have drawn criticism from Patterson, who has measured snow melt and stream flow figures showing a much higher residue of lead in the last several years.

He contends that the lead "influx" to the human body may build up over a period of years, helping to create damaged cells or tissues which cause disease, or in some cases death.

The California State Health Department and other agencies have examined the studies Patterson has cited, and believe that normal — and safe — levels have not been exceeded.

The Columbia University team reported today that 20 percent of the subjects in their study had fewer than 65 micrograms of lead per liter of urine. Normal levels are

generally conceded to range from 20 to 65.

BLOOD TEST

They reported that 90 percent of the subjects had fewer than 50 micrograms per 100 milliliters of blood; the normal range is from 15 to 40.

The Columbia team said also that "no significant change in lead levels of the blood and urine in the last three decades has been shown."

Doctor Goldwater was chairman of a World Health Organization study group that evaluated lead content of the human body.

In another report Dr. Louis S. Jaffe, of the U.S. Public Health Service, described recent laboratory studies of the effects of smog and ozone on animals.

CITS BIRTHRATE

Prolonged exposure to smog cut down the birthrate and produced an increased susceptibility to lung infection, chronic disease and

lung tumors as the mice grew older.

A Stanford Medical Center team — Dr. Rodney R. Beard and George Wertheim — tested student volunteers exposed to carbon monoxide.

Eighteen volunteers were subjected to exhaustive tests of their ability to judge time intervals, after inhaling a variety of concentrations of carbon monoxide, ranging from 0 to 250 parts per million (ppm).

It has generally been considered impossible to measure effects on the human body below 100 ppm in the air.

The Stanford investigators reported however, that student judgment was impaired when they breathed CO-contaminated air at 50 ppm and upward, and performance became erratic.

The study is expected to help set realistic health standards of acceptable carbon monoxide contaminants in the air.