

December 21, 1970

John S. Chapman, M.D., Editor-Elect
Archives of Environmental Health
P.O. Box 19745
Medical Center Station
Dallas, Texas 75219

Dear Doctor Chapman:

I am sending two envelopes each containing one article, the two being those to which I referred in my last letter. This note will be found in one of these envelopes; the other will contain only the paper.

I must explain my reason for recommending the publication of both of these articles, since otherwise the policy of the Archives, announced hitherto, would bring about their rejection as reviews rather than original articles.

The paper by Zielhuis is an attempt to present not only the information about the tests most commonly used in the interpretation of the status of individuals subjected to occupational exposure to lead, but the relative usefulness of these tests. This was one of the most important tasks of the Conference in Amsterdam, and as such, I consider it to be a necessary part of the publication.

The paper by de Bruin is indeed a review article, but a most unusual one, in that it brings to the service of medicine, the detailed skill of a biochemist in searching out and interpreting (as well as a biochemist, with his limitations, can do) the meaning and the potential usefulness of all of the biochemical phenomena relating to lead absorption and lead poisoning. The importance of this, for the Archives, as I view the situation, arises from the fact that a very serious effort is being made at this time (and for the past several years) to open up and take a good look at all of the "subclinical" effects of the absorption of the airborne lead which has resulted from modern, and not so modern, technologic and industrial usage of lead. It is believed, generally with some good reasons, that the lead in the air of this country, especially its cities, is derived primarily from the use of lead antiknock preparations in automobile fuel. There is, as you know, a very considerable apprehension lest the public or certain segments of it are being slowly poisoned, and that the effects to be most concerned about, will fail to resemble what we know as clinical lead poisoning. It is necessary, I think, for the doctors and technical people who read the Archives, to know as much about this, from a diagnostic and investigative viewpoint, as may be possible. This article, I believe, is of fundamental importance. I have not encountered anywhere in the literature, an article as comprehensive as this, and I believe it should be published in the Archives. As you may or may not know, I have, for many years, been a strong partisan of the Archives, and of its predecessors, and I am still very jealous of its position, as the foremost publication concerned with the problems of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. It should, I think, be the best and strongest voice in

KE 0019394

representing the professional ideals and purposes of the American Academy of Occupational Medicine, and it should also undertake to express much of the best thinking (and preparation for thinking, i.e., research), in the field of Environmental Medicine. This field, which is now so beset by emotional and political activity, needs very much the balanced judgment of well-informed professional people, in order to keep within rational bounds.

I'm afraid I have belied the reference to brevity in my further remarks. However, I have thought that you should know what is in my mind, in dealing with these papers.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.
Professor Emeritus of
Occupational Medicine

RAK:wb

KE 0019395