

January 27, 1970

Katharine R. Boucot, M.D., Chief Editor
Archives of Environmental Health
349 Wister Road
Wynnewood, Pennsylvania 19096

Dear Katharine:

I have just finished an initial, but fairly careful, examination of the manuscripts which you sent to me on December 31 and January 2, respectively, and I think it wise to check with you at once as to their disposition. I am proceeding at once to prepare three (3) of the papers for publication, namely, (1) that of Dr. Beritic, entitled "Lead Blood Levels and Lead Colics" (even the title requires revision); (2) that of the Gajdos (husband and wife), entitled "ALA-Synthetase Activity, etc." (an excellent paper, which I'll enjoy handling); and (3) Dr. Stankovic's paper on "Evaluation of Biochemical Tests in Lead Exposure," which will give me little trouble.

The other three, I have no hesitation in recommending for rejection. I shall comment on them below, giving my reasons for so doing. First, however, I raise certain questions, and say something about procedure.

Am I to assume that the other papers submitted to you are acceptable and in suitable form for publication? Or are others yet to come to me? If the latter is the case, those remaining to be considered should be sent to me in San Francisco at the address indicated in my letter of January 7, which is repeated at the end of this letter.

In view of the indirect manner by which these papers were submitted, it may be well to consider how rejections should be dealt with. All of the papers were brought to the meeting in Amsterdam arranged by Dr. Zielhuis. They were turned in to him, and in turn were handed over to Dr. Malcolm, who with two of our British colleagues was to put together a summary, and send it with the papers to me, for submission to the Archives, and for such editing as might be required, ultimately. Some of the manuscripts available at the meeting were revised by their authors, since, obviously, they were not in shape for publication. One, at least, was revised voluntarily by the author, because of the discussion of it at the meeting. The question arises as to whether the final decision as to the acceptance or rejection (especially the rejection) should be submitted to the individual authors or to Dr. Zielhuis directly, or through me, for relaying to the individual authors. I could explain the rejections to Dr. Zielhuis (for explanation to the individual authors, as he might wish to do). You will note, in my comments about the individual papers, that a rejection need not reflect so much upon the precise content of certain of the papers, as upon its unsuitability to the purposes of the Archives. For example, the generalizations in at least one of the papers might be regarded by its author as entirely suitable as a contribution to a closed symposium, and yet be a very poor contribution for general professional consumption. I have no fixed opinion

about this, and your decision is final, of course. However, I shall wish to know how you will proceed, since I shall wish to write to Dr. Zielhuis in any case, as well as to Dr. Malcolm, simply as a matter of courtesy. Now as to the papers.

1. The paper of Professor Albahary cannot be made suitable for publication, through any efforts of mine. It deals with too many facets of the problem, none of which is given adequate treatment. As one of the reviewers has suggested, the paper resembles notes for a lecture which might have been filled out by lantern slides and appropriate comments. Not all of the opinions expressed are valid, in my opinion, although that fact, of itself, is not pertinent. However, Albahary is standing, to some extent, on his professorial authority, and this is not altogether out of character. I have known Albahary personally, for some time. He is a man of great charm, and I like him as a person. However, he is a bit too relaxed in his judgments, I think, to be altogether dependable as an authority.
2. The paper entitled "Compensated and Decompensated Action of Lead upon Human Erythropoiesis" by T. Beritić (as differentiated from this author's other paper), is not an acceptable paper for publication in the Archives. In this, I agree with your reviewer. I have no hesitation in recommending its rejection, despite the author's somewhat interesting way of interpreting certain of the phenomena. Here is an attractive man and a good clinician, who is just a bit out of his depth in his view of the meaning of analytical procedures and results.
3. The manuscript of Dr. S. Kosmider, "Long Term Exposure to Lead Intoxication and Atherosclerosis," is not, in my view, amenable to shortening, and I do not believe there is point to linguistic alterations. Improvement in the language of this paper will not provide definitive evidence of any causal relationships between the absorption of lead and the genesis of atherosclerosis, for there is no such evidence in this paper. The discussion is interesting in spots, but it contains nothing new, with the possible exception of a somewhat different speculative approach than is usual. I would not like to represent this paper as one which was taken very seriously by the group assembled here.
4. I consider the paper of Dr. Lehnert to be about the least useful of the contributions made in the presentations at Amsterdam. I so regarded it at the time, and my study of the manuscript, apart from the generally congenial group, has not altered my opinion of it. It is, perhaps, (I say "perhaps" for the reason that I am not competent to judge its strictly technical worth), a venturesome attempt to introduce mathematical precision into a dynamic situation which in its intimate mechanisms is unfathomable at present. I do not consider it to be a useful interpretation, on the one hand, nor a speculation which is likely to lead to new investigations, on the other. In any case, I do not think this paper, in its present form, is suitable for inclusion in the papers of this symposium. Furthermore, I have no hope of so altering its form as to make it suitable. Perhaps someone else, such as the somewhat favorable reviewer, could do this. The only thing I can suggest, which might be helpful, would be to appeal to one of my friends in this line of endeavor, to look at this paper with me, and to advise me as to its worth as an idea. I'll do this if you wish me to.

I am not now returning any of these manuscripts to you. I shall go to work at once on the three which I recommend for acceptance and hope to improve. I shall wait for your advice on the others.

Sincerely yours,

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

RAK:wp

Dictated but not read

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