

June 26, 1970

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Dear Doctor Weiss:

My first impression of the paper of Doctors Keller (M.D.) and Arnold (Ph.D.), which you sent me on June 22, was that part of it, including the data, had been omitted, when it was sent to me. I simply could not believe that anyone, nowmatter how totally ignorant of what has been going on in relation to lead in the environment of man, could possibly make the statements found in this paper, without, at least, submitting the pertinent evidence.

This incredibly bad paper - bad primarily, because of the innocence of the authors - should not be published, as it is, in any Journal which aspires to be reputable. The data would have to be presented and assembled with care, and if a single result, of the order of that reported as the upper limit, of those obtained (0.77 ug. per 100 ml. or mg., which ever happened to be the case), the individual involved should be investigated with care, clinically, if a repetition or near repetition of the high result should be observed. No such result should ever be disregarded, for it means, if true, a type of exposure to lead that is entirely beyond the range of ordinary environmental conditions, and is in fact an indication of danger to both mother and child. It is likely that only one or perhaps two of such high results were obtained, and that they were the result of errors in handling the sample, or of contamination in the laboratory, since they are quite impossible except on the basis of unusual types of exposure. However, such results do occur in the general population and require searching investigation to disclose the source of exposure. No such result has ever been seen, in connection with the pollution of the air of the general community with lead.

The statement of the physician (Dr. Keller) that no person within this group of people was suffering from lead poisoning, in the face of such evidence of danger is, therefore, incredibly naive. One looks for danger in relation to the public health rather than cases (although such may occur), and the presence of danger is the signal for preventive action.

In any case, good, solid data, presented properly and appraised intelligently, should go with this manuscript. Without such evidence, the entire thesis of the authors is nonsense.

I know well Dr. Stopps, and I am familiar with the duPont Laboratory as it was initiated some time ago with our collaboration. I know nothing about it now. Stopps is a good scientist, who is familiar with this matter, and I cannot imagine that he was consulted at all in the preparation of this paper or in the interpretation of the

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analytical results. I shall write to him at once about this paper and its authors, since it is highly essential that medical men, scientists and public should not be given this type of misinformation, under the guise of sound investigation. It will not serve our people well merely to refuse the publication of this paper, only to have it appear in print elsewhere.

I shall be grateful to you for any information you may care to give me about the ultimate fate of this paper, since I expect to follow it up as far as professional courtesy will allow me to go.

Cordially yours,

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

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