

Copy to Dr. Edgar

September 17, 1935

Mr. Wm. P. Hugo
General Superintendent
Associated Oil Company
Avon, California

Dear Mr. Hugo:-

Your letter of September 5th concerning an employee of yours who has been diagnosed as having progressive muscular atrophy, has been referred to me from the New York office of the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation.

As a result of years of experience with the conditions in testing laboratories, it seems almost certain that there is little or no opportunity for significant lead exposure in work of this type. Therefore, unless the occupation of your employee differs materially from that of a large number of other men who have been engaged in this work, there is no basis in his occupational exposure for considering seriously lead as a cause of his present illness. Progressive muscular atrophy is a clinical condition which has been known for some time and there is no good reason for assuming the presence of such a factor as lead in the origin of the condition. It must be admitted that we do not know very much about the precise background of its occurrence. It is also true that lead poisoning is likely to result in muscular damage and in atrophy of certain groups of muscles. In the case of lead, the picture is usually quite characteristic and it should be possible to make a differential diagnosis.

We shall be very glad to do what we can to establish a diagnosis in the case of this man. One of my associates will be in California in the course of a regular trip for the purpose of examining the personnel at the mixing plants. I shall turn your letter over to him and he will be glad to make an examination and obtain as much clinical information as is possible. In the meantime we should be glad to make analyses on the blood and excreta of your employee in order to see whether he shows any evidence at present of lead absorption. It may or may not be wise to do this at present since it may be that his exposure was discontinued some months ago, in which

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case the results would probably be of little value. However, I shall be glad to send the necessary containers with instructions for the collection of samples if you wish it done. On the other hand I repeat that unless there has been some unusual circumstance associated with this man's occupation, it is scarcely possible that his illness could be attributed in any way to lead exposure.

Very truly yours,

RAK:is

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

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