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Env. Pollution

Environmental Health Department

August 31, 1971

Miss Elizabeth Barley
Good Housekeeping Magazine
5th Floor
959 8th Avenue
New York, New York

Dear Miss Barley:

I wish to thank you very much for allowing me to read and comment on your up-coming article on heavy metals in the environment. On the whole, I think that the article is a good one and have only a few comments, mainly on lead.

1. Page 4, paragraph 2. You state that a well-known example of the inclusion of heavy metals into consumer products is the inclusion of lead in paint. While you do point out that this practice is largely discontinued, I wonder if it would not be better to choose a different example. Paint certainly is not intended for consumption any more than mercury in thermometers is intended for consumption.
2. Page 5, paragraph 2. While the FDA's attention was called to the pottery problem by the Good Housekeeping article, it should be pointed out that the lead industry and the ceramics industry have cooperated in the development of a glaze surveillance program. The research activity leading to the glaze surveillance program has been underway for at least a decade. Enclosed with this letter for your information are two publications, one put out by the International Lead Zinc Research Organization, Inc., entitled, "Lead Glazes for Dinnerware" and another entitled "Glazes for Art Potters and Hobbyists" published by the Lead Industries Association. While I cannot really challenge what you have said in your article, I do believe that some mention of industry's voluntary activities in this area should be noted.
3. Section on cadmium. You point out that scientists have reported a direct relationship between the amount of cadmium in air in a city and deaths caused by high blood pressure in that city. I suggest that while the correlation of cadmium concentration and hypertension has been shown that a causation between cadmium and hypertension has yet to be proven. Hypertension is correlated with urban living which means that any contaminant which occurs to a greater concentration in urban atmospheres than in non-urban atmospheres could be equally as well linked with hypertension.
5. Section on lead. (a) Certainly it is true that some "environmental experts" hope that lead can be completely eliminated from gasoline within a few years. I suggest, however, that there is no unanimity on this subject. In fact, a controversy rages within the scientific community, and I trust that there are as many

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"environmental experts" who do not feel that lead in gasoline poses a health hazard as there are those who feel that a threat is posed. It might be better for the purposes of your article to point out the existence of this controversy. If you wish the names of "experts" who are not convinced that the removal of lead in gasoline is necessary, I will be happy to provide them to you.

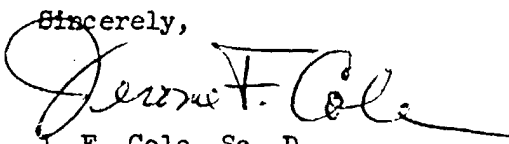
(b) While it is true that urban residents are exposed to more lead than their non-urban counterparts, a recent study released by the Environmental Protection Agency, the International Lead Zinc Research Organization, Inc., and the American Petroleum Institute shows that the lead contained in blood is not related to the content of lead in air of urban communities. It is significant that no relationship exists between the concentration of lead in blood and the concentration of lead in air in our major urban cities. Enclosed is a copy of an interim report on the Seven Cities Survey which points out this fact. You will note that in an urban area of Philadelphia, Rittenhouse Square, the concentration of lead in the atmosphere is only half that found in Pasadena, California, and yet the lead in the blood of the population of Rittenhouse Square is considerably higher than that found in Pasadena.

(c) I am not clear as to your statement that "a variety of industrial and mining processes" also contribute to the urban accumulation of lead in the body. This is not true for the general population, but certainly may be true for certain occupationally exposed individuals.

(d) Inclusion of acute symptoms is not really relevant to the discussion of lead in the environment. No one save for children who eat paint is exposed to anywhere enough lead to cause acute symptoms. If you desire to leave the acute symptomology in the text, I suggest that you point out that the quantities of lead required to produce this syndrome are far greater than that encountered in our normal environment.

Again, I thank you very much for allowing me to review the article. I hope that my comments prove of some use to you.

Sincerely,



J. F. Cole, Sc. D.

Director, Environmental Health

cg:

cc Jack Danby
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