

February 6, 1934

Dr. Zolton T. Wirtschafter
908 Keith Building
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Dr. Wirtschafter:

Please accept my thanks for your reprint which I am very glad to have. I feel quite certain that you will not misunderstand me when I tell you that I do not agree with any of your conclusions. I do not say that lead does not and can not produce vascular disease, but on the other hand I do not think the evidence which you have adduced has any considerable weight. It is, I believe, another example of "post hoc ergo propter hoc". I should not trouble myself to point out this fallacy to one of your wisdom except for the fact that a bit of the evidence which you have submitted, namely, the content of the tissues of one of the patients long after the cessation of exposure, can scarcely be regarded as evidence at all since the findings are substantially within the normal limits. In fact we have found lead in the tissues of definitely un-exposed subjects in amounts approximately equivalent to those given in your article. In this connection let me refer you to our recent articles in the Journal of Industrial Hygiene where we have shown that even severely exposed persons apparently lose lead down to the normal level in from a year and a half to two years following the cessation of exposure. Moreover we have been quite unable to find evidences of lead absorption in any persons whose tissues we have examined after the lapse of such a period of time. I think we can say with very good assurance that the leaded individual loses most of his lead within the first six months after the cessation of exposure, and that he reaches the normal level almost regardless of the quantity absorbed in very little over a year. This does not mean that vascular damage can not take place within this time period, but it does mean, I believe, that the progress of the disease beyond such a period of time has little or no relationship to the presence of lead in the body.

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Dr. Zolton Wirtschafter

You may or may not accept the above statements as the truth in this matter, nor do I urge you one way or the other. I am merely stating my opinions in the matter and the basis for them. I personally doubt if lead poisoning has much to do with the production of vascular disease, but I have that doubt largely for the reason that I have not as yet been able to find any evidence that it is an active factor.

With kindest personal regards,

Sincerely yours,

RAE:TS

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

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