

BLOOD LEAD AND δ -AMINOLAEVULINIC ACID DEHYDRASE
LEVELS IN CHILDREN AND IN SUCKLING RATS.

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There has been controversy over the association of elevated blood lead levels in children, and mental deficiency. (Moncrieff et al, 1964; Gibson et al, 1967).

The present study in children has revealed a negative correlation ($r = -0.81$) between blood lead levels and δ -aminolaevulic acid dehydrase (ALA-D) activity. Significant reductions in enzyme activity occurred at lead levels currently considered to be in the upper range of normal. When lead was fed to lactating rats there was a significant and commensurate reduction in both blood and brain ALA-D activity of the suckling rat.

These results suggest that even modest elevations of blood lead may be associated with biochemical abnormalities in the child brain.

Moncrieff, A.A., Koumides, O.P., Clayton, B.E., Patrick, A.D.,
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