

AUG 24 1972 6-1 Camden Starts Attack on Lead Poison

The city of Camden has launched a multi-pronged attack on the lead poison menace to children.

The program at present is centered in a 60-block area of south Camden but the city eventually hopes to make detection and medical referral services available to residents throughout Camden.

In the first two and a half weeks of the program, the city made 532 home inspections in the designated area and referred 161 children between the ages of 1 and 6 for blood tests.

Herron, Nardi in Charge

Harry Herron, health coordinator for the city and Camden County, who is directing the program with Mayor Joseph M. Nardi Jr., said reports on the first 70 children tested resulted in one child being hospitalized for lead poisoning. He said 15 other children had significant amounts of lead in their systems and another 29 lesser amounts.

Reports on the home inspections, made to determine the lead content of paint used in the dwellings, are not complete, Herron said.

The area designated for the pilot studies is a section being improved under the federal-state Neighborhood Improvement Program and Mayor Nardi said the city would seek additional funding from NIP for the lead poisoning program.

Lead-Based Paint Banned

The area is bounded by Atlantic ave., Pine st., Broadway and the Delaware River, and contains a total of 1,853 homes.

Herron said the project, when fully implemented, will include educational programs and law enforcement in addition to home inspections and blood tests.

A recently passed state law bans the use of lead-based paint and requires landlords either to remove lead-based paint up to a height of four feet or cover it over with protective paneling.

City Makes Tests

Herron said the city now tests for lead content in paint by making scrapings.

However, starting Monday, he said, the city will have a special appliance, containing a radioisotope, for lead detection.

Medical referrals under the pilot project are being handled by the city health department station at 28th and Federal sts. in cooperation with Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Camden.

This collection method said means that the samples can be mailed to a central laboratory, so no one city would have to buy a large number of expensive spectrophotometers. Dr. Joselow is director of the Laboratory of Environmental Toxicology and a member of the department of pathology at the New Jersey Medical School. His research was supported by state, local and institutional money, he said, and much of the work was done by an undergraduate chemistry student from Rutgers University, Ann Stenhouse, who is now employed at the medical school.

THE FRESH AIR FUND GIVE SUMMER TO A CHILD.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, AUGUST 27, 1972

NEW BLOOD TESTS TO HELP CHILDREN

A Simple Method Developed
in Lead Poisoning Drive

By NANCY HICKS

Special to The New York Times

NEWARK, Aug. 26 — Researchers at the state medical school here have developed an extremely simple method of collecting minute blood samples to test for childhood lead poisoning.

The method, called paper-in-a-cup, involves a pin-prick puncture in the finger from which a drop of blood is blotted up by a piece of white filter paper. A one-quarter-inch circular piece of blood-saturated paper is punched out with a regular commercial hole puncher, which gives testers a standard-sized sample without having to measure the amount of blood drawn.

The blood-saturated paper dot is then placed in a tiny metal cup and put into the flame of an atomic absorption spectrophotometer, which can measure the content of lead or other metals.

The paper-in-a-cup method was developed by Dr. Morris Joselow and Dr. John Boden, both chemists. Because it obviates the necessity of measurement and detailed preparation of samples, it could possibly allow cheap and easy door-to-door testing for lead poisoning.

Mainly Childhood Disease
All such community screening efforts thus far have required the use of trained technicians to do the blood sample collecting.

Lead poisoning is primarily a childhood disease that occurs when children nibble chips of

lead-based paint that peel from the walls of old housing. The problem is said to involve 8 per cent of the children in such cities as Newark.

In addition, the problem of lead poisoning in adults is receiving attention because lead exists in so many everyday substances—gasoline, ceramic dinnerware and ink in color publications.

The childhood problem has been a major public health concern. Severe lead poisoning has been known to cause brain damage and even death. The key to prevention lies in cleaning up old housing and in finding children with elevated blood-lead levels before symptoms occur.

For many years testing of children proved difficult because blood lead analysis had to be performed on large samples of blood taken by hypodermic needle from the vein of the child's arm or neck.

Over the last few years, however, instrumentation and materials have been developed that make analysis of small samples possible. New York City, for example, began testing by using a measured amount of blood taken from the finger.

British Scientist Cited

Dr. Joselow said that he had got his idea for collecting samples without measuring from a British scientist who reported in January that he had taken samples of blood in an instrument called a capillary tube, put some drops on a piece of paper, punched them out with the hole puncher, placed them in the tiny cup and put them into the flame of the spectrophotometer.

In bypassing the special collection step, the chances of contaminating the sample are greatly diminished, Dr. Joselow

Lead Poisoning Peril Revealed in Camden By Board of Health

By BILL THOMPSON

Of The Inquirer Staff

CAMDEN. — A two week survey by the local health department has revealed a sizable poisoning problem in this city.

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Myrdal Joseph M. Nardi reported Wednesday that 532 homes have been visited in the past two weeks by health workers in search of lead poisoning in children from ages 1 to 6.

NEW JERSEY
"There's evidence that lead poisoning does exist," Nardi said. "It's particularly crucial in our ghetto neighborhoods."

HARRY HERMAN, city health officer, said 70 of 161 children have received blood tests as a result of the survey and that 15 children were found to have lead poisoning.

The area being surveyed is bounded by Pine st. on the North, Atlantic ave. on the South, Broadway on the East and the Delaware River on the West.

About 60 more children are expected to get blood tests next Friday, Herman said, as the survey continues in the 65 block area which includes 1,850 homes.

Herman said the survey should be completed by the end of October.

Nardi said the children are being tested at the health center at 26th and Federal sts. and that a \$5,000 instrument to indicate lead and paint will be available to the city Monday.

WHEN THE instrument indicates lead in paint, Herman said, the landlord will be ordered to remove the paint and replace with a paint of less than one percent lead content.

Herman added that lead poisoning cases are those children who are found to have "40 micrograms or more of lead" in their blood.

HEALTH WORKERS have been able to get information about lead poisoning by asking parents if their children have a history of pica.

Nardi said the solution to lead poisoning is slum clearance and urban renewal.

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