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Lead Poisoning Peril Grows

WASHINGTON — Once regarded as a plague confined to the ghettos of big cities, lead poisoning has been found in small and medium sized cities as well, according to a study by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

Screening of 6,151 children one to six years old in 14 cities ranging in population from 10,000 to 150,000 showed 18.4 pct had "evidence of undue absorption of lead," according to the study printed in a recent journal of the American Medical Association.

ANOTHER 3 pct. or 51 children were found to have "unequivocal" cases of lead poisoning.

Lead poisoning, which can result in death, mental retardation, psychosis or paralysis, has generally been classified as a problem unique to the

older, deteriorated sections of big cities, where children eat flakes of lead-based paint from peeling walls.

However, the authors of the Illinois study said their research "suggest(s) that pediatric lead intoxication is not

confined to urban slums but does occur with alarming frequency in smaller communities."

A SPOKESMAN for Sen. Edward M. Kennedy's Senate health subcommittee said federal funds are available to help communities set up screening, prevention and treatment programs for lead poisoning.

However, the long-held assumption in the medical community that lead poisoning is "a ghetto disease" has kept many smaller cities from taking advantage of the federal program, Kennedy's spokesman said.

"The money is there — it's a problem of who applies for the grants," he said. "So far much of the money has gone to the major urban areas, because that's where the kids are, and that's where the hazard has been recognized."

Tunney Gets Wrong Count

RIVERSIDE, Cal. 8 — "I am sorry you were not successful in the recent election," read the telegram from U. S. Sen. John Tunney to Walter Ingalls, a fellow Democrat who ran for the California Assembly.

Ingalls says he certainly intends to continue in public service because he won the election. Why the telegram of condolences? "I guess my name got in the wrong stack," Ingalls said.

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