



University of Cincinnati

Cincinnati, Ohio 45219

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE, EDEN AND BETHESDA AVENUES
KETTERING LABORATORY
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

September 10, 1971

Dr. Mario di Lullo
Division des Affairs Division
North Atlantic Treaty Organization
1110 Bruxelles, Belgium

Re: Application of Leon Goldman et al.
for a Research Grant

Dear Doctor de Lullo:

While I am well and very favorably acquainted with Leon Goldman, M.D., Professor of Dermatology in this Medical College, who will maintain the surveillance of this work, I have no knowledge at all concerning Dr. Johanna Vahl or Charly Allemand. As you are certainly aware, much as to the productive work and ideation of this group of collaborators will depend upon the qualities (both personal and scientific) of these investigators. It is in this spirit, therefore, that I must give you some estimate of the value of this proposal. I am entirely familiar with Dr. Goldman as an investigator, from having been associated with him as a collaborator from time to time.

Let me say, at the outset, that, in my opinion, this investigation of the hair will not provide much useful information, at once, as to the practical problem involved in the occurrence of lead poisoning among children. There is a vague idea abroad that the unfortunate situation with respect to the prevalence of lead poisoning among very small children in the slum areas of the older cities in the United States has something to do with airborne lead and the deposition of such lead in streets, parks and certain urban lands. The fact is, I am fairly sure, that such is not the case. The cases of poisoning arise, almost entirely, from the ingestion of paint, applied in several layers on the interior woodwork of houses in the period prior to the modern era of paint manufacture (for interior use), and never removed, but only (in many instances) covered with new paint of very low lead content. The dosage of lead ingested and absorbed in this way is quite large (of a totally different order of magnitude than that which could derive from airborne lead). The contribution made by the "fall out" of airborne lead, is negligible.

There is no doubt in my mind that the occurrence of lead in the hair of human beings should be investigated, as a means of determining the body burden of lead in the live and intact individual, but I am reasonably sure that the initial investigations (now being made by a variety of methods and by varied investigators) will raise more questions than they will answer, and will involve prolonged study. Even so, this should be done and continued until definitive physiologic facts have been portrayed satisfactorily.

The Children's Hospital in Cincinnati has been the focal point of the investigations of this type in this City, in which this Laboratory has participated for many years. From this point of view, this request for funds comes from the right source in Cincinnati, and such funds can be expected to initiate an investigation which will continue indefinitely and productively, provided funds can be obtained in support

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of it. You should consider, therefore, the effect of the policies of your organization, whether they involve the initiation of a continuing project, or the initial catalysis of a project which will have to obtain its support from other sources.

Let me say, in addition, that I and my associates in this Laboratory will do what we can to encourage the prosecution of this work and to provide such guidance for it as may be acceptable to those directly concerned, as well as feasible among ourselves. Having been engaged for many years in a general study of the behavior of lead in the animal organism, specifically in man, I continue to be deeply concerned with investigations which are contributing to our better understanding of this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.
Professor Emeritus of
Occupational Medicine

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