

Presbyterian Hospital of
Pacific Medical Center



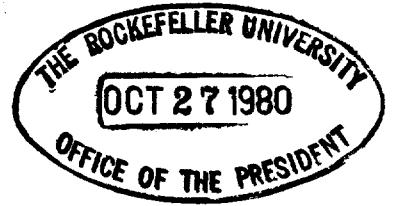
LINDA HAWES CLEVER, M.D.
CHAIRMAN
DEPARTMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

resources

Clever

RuH

OK



October 21, 1980

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
President
The Rockefeller University
New York, New York 10021

Dear Josh:

It was with a sense of relief, exultation, and excitement that I heard of your thoughts about establishing a center for studying "untoward events" in the workplace. Rockefeller, because of its breadth, excellence, and objectivity can have a tremendous impact in occupational medicine, which is currently quite bereft of research thrusts and valid data. Your center could look at at least two approaches. One would be to evaluate surprises; the other would be more systematic. Surprises would include:

1. spills and other acute overdoses, .
2. unusual syndromes (such as TMI trimelytic anhydride), see attached,
3. asthma,
4. exceptional sensitivity to common substances (for example, I have seen a lead battery worker who has clear bone marrow and probably renal and GI toxicity when his leads are in the sixty micrograms per deciliter range; most workers aren't affected until their leads are eighty to one hundred micrograms per deciliter,

.....

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
October 21, 1980
Page Two

5. new processes which have unexpected side effects.

The more systematic approach would be to evaluate the metabolic effects by classes of chemicals depending, for example, on current toxicologic information and/or volume of use (for example, PCB, vinyl chloride).

A few caveats come to mind:

1. If you do not have a functioning referral network, which should include industry and labor, that would need to be established.
2. Your center must be objective by union and management standards or you could ignore the adversary, trench warfare in the workplace and take the approach that Rockefeller is above it all. But you must at least be acutely aware of labor/management issues.
3. Long-term follow-up of end-organ effects would be an additional attraction to volunteers who might be willing to have metabolic parameters evaluated. It might also be, for example, that effects on an inducible enzyme system might be permanent.
4. It would be most useful, of course, for you to know what research is already going on at Mt. Sinai, University of Cincinnati, UC Davis, in industry (DuPont, Dow, Standard Oil).
5. Above all, be prepared for flack, in spite of your good intentions. To some people, knowledge is dangerous since they do not know the outcome of its acquisition. It seems to me that ignorance is the source of even more conflict, however.

Best wishes! And please let me know if I can help in any way.

Cordially,



Linda Hawes Clever, M. D.
Chairman
Department of Occupational
Health

LHC:BP
Enclosure