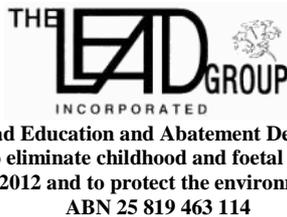




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Case File: Helping a Doctor Help 35,000 Lead-Poisoned People Around the Lead Smelter at La Oroya in Peru - How GLASS Works

by Elizabeth O'Brien, Manager, Global Lead Advice and Support Service (GLASS) 24/3/06

On Jan 11th 2006, a doctor working for the Health Ministry in Peru, Dr Godofredo Arauzo, used the form on our website to write: "In Oroya City near Huancayo is a smelter that is eliminating 2500 tons every day to lead and the children have in average 350% more lead in them blood that is permitted and the mother in one research have 200 ug/100gr to placenta and the newborn in average 200% lead in them blood. Could you do a research about to this genocide contamination and send me literature about hazard to lead to health."

I immediately emailed the Doe Run lead smelter owners asking for factsheets and to work with them to help Dr Arauzo help the people of La Oroya but received no reply so wrote again and I await a reply. I also found in our calls database a reference in the Global Lead Network egroup to a US-funded La Oroya lead smelter environmental health assessment team and contacted the lead researcher, Dr David Sterling (previously a client of ours). The report of their 2005 research in Peru had only been drafted in Spanish and was awaiting publication but Dr Sterling agreed to supply the draft to our Spanish-speaking client. Once he obtained the latest air, dust, soil, water and blood lead data and knew that likely all 35,000 local residents were lead poisoned, Dr Arauzo requested a DVD of our web-published slide show for doctors, written by Dr Ben Balzer of the GLASS Technical Advisory Board (TAB). Because the Peruvian doctor's ministry-provided hotmail account could not handle attachments he also requested a hard copy of our 28 newsletters and all general information about lead health effects and nutritional intervention. We posted a 2 kg package for \$27 by seairmail and invited him to join our relevant egroups as well as referring him to the Global Lead Network egroup. Extremely grateful* and now more informed, Dr Arauzo requested further information on the reference list in the slide show and after I spoke to Dr Balzer, Dr Balzer put him in touch with the most important author (also a GLASS referral/expert), Dr Bruce Lanphear who *further* connected him with the world best-practicing clinician in pediatric lead poisoning – Dr Michael Shannon (now a new expert added to our database). We airmailed for \$60 a 1.6kg parcel comprising the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC's) case management guidebooks and twenty journal articles including two I had to purchase for our library for \$54 and several by Professor Brian Gulson, head of GLASS TAB.

Meanwhile, a newspaper article was emailed to GLASS by the National Toxics Network in Australia, about the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funding pediatric environmental health units in Argentina and other South American countries. I contacted the journalist for an email contact in the Argentinian health department and put our client in contact with the people receiving the US EPA funding so that he could request a unit for La Oroya.

The development/seeking out and provision of information and referrals required for this one client could have been more quickly and efficiently achieved, but for the time over-head in training and administering the large numbers of volunteers who operate GLASS. Wages funding will provide continuous staffing, co-ordination of volunteers and a more productive service.

Update as at 12/11/08: after providing GLASS with a factsheet in Spanish (currently being translated by a volunteer), Dr Arauzo agreed to join [The LEAD Group's Technical Advisory Board](#), becoming our first Board member in South America.