Editor’s Choice June 2015

This issue starts with an important systematic literature review on the transmission of leprosy, carried out by Dr Martin Bratschi of the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute in Basel. The paper clearly delineates the issues we are confident about and the many areas about which we are uncertain. Please note that the Tables for this paper, which are large, and which summarize all the papers included in the review, are published online only and are not in the printed version of the paper.

The online version of Leprosy Review, including all extra material such as the Tables mentioned above and all colour figures, is freely available at https://www.lepra.org.uk/leprosy-review-index. In addition, I’m pleased to be able to announce that the whole archive of Leprosy Review, from the first issue in 1930, has been put into digital format and will be available online, free-of-charge, very soon. This has been arranged by Dr Marcos Virmond, President of the International Leprosy Association, following the successful online publication of the similar archive of the International Journal of Leprosy and Other Mycobacterial Diseases, available at http://www.leprosy-ila.org/leprosyjournal/gn1/edicoes_anteriores.php. These archives are fully searchable using authors’ names or keywords. We gratefully acknowledge this generous assistance from Dr Virmond and colleagues in Brazil.

The next paper is a report of the meeting in Houston, for which the literature review was commissioned. Another issue of continuing importance in leprosy is relapse, which continues to occur despite the high bactericidal efficiency of MDT. Dr Shen Jianping reports on a review of 40 relapse cases in China.

Efforts to identify new cases amongst contacts are being stepped up in many programs and this forces program managers to find new ways to overcome logistic and practical obstacles. Dr Swetalina Pradhan in Odisha, India noted that many patients were from quite inaccessible areas and she reports an innovative attempt to reach family members.

We have included six case reports in this issue. Interestingly, all concern lepromatous (LL) cases, illustrating the fact that such cases still occur wherever leprosy is endemic and that they often present in unusual ways and develop unusual complications. Because these cases are likely to be important sources of transmission of M. leprae, it is vital that dermatologists and other clinicians remain aware of the complex and varied nature of lepromatous leprosy.

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