

Editor's Choice

The last issue of *Leprosy Review* for 2006 covers a wide variety of topics, and we are especially pleased to publish the Consensus Statement on Prevention of Disability, a very significant document. Research in this area is now a priority, especially in the area of self-care and footwear provision. Research aimed at improving the efficacy of specific POD interventions is still needed, but should be seen as a lower priority.

The Editorial by P. S. S. Sundar Rao concludes that a thorough understanding of the epidemiology of leprosy in India is crucial to the eradication of the disease in India. Paul Fine's Editorial discusses the manner in which leprosy statistics are presented by the WHO, and suggests that a critical appraisal of the available data, rather than verbatim reporting, would be more helpful.

Two papers in this issue highlight the problems of delay in diagnosis. Nicholls and colleagues review the effect of interventions in promoting early detection of leprosy and minimizing patient-related delay. Van Veen *et al.* conclude that with longer delays, the risk of impairment at presentation increases. Understanding and addressing the underlying mechanisms of delay specific to a patient population adds substantially to the effectiveness of leprosy control.

A short report by Ranganadha Rao on the use of skin smears in field laboratories concludes that more time should be given to training in this valuable technique. Also in the field of education, two papers by Brandsma and Schwartz report on a workshop on re-enablement of the neurologically impaired hand, held in Nepal in November 2004, with a beautifully illustrated discussion of the surgical procedures that can be employed.

Schuring and colleagues report that among patients with few clinical signs of leprosy, the size, but not the number, of skin lesions was positively correlated with seropositivity. Wakade and Shetty isolated viable bacilli from a high proportion of negative BT-BB cases using the mouse foot pad assay. Chen and colleagues found poor inter-observer reliability in both sensory testing of skin lesions with the cotton wool method and palpation of superficial peripheral nerves, leading to inaccuracy in the diagnosis of leprosy.

Two case reports discuss the finding of indeterminate leprosy in a young child (Krishna Moorthy and Desikan), and the use of magnetic resonance imaging to visualize an ulnar nerve abscess (Hari *et al.*), while Kaur and Singh report the occurrence of immune reconstitution inflammatory syndrome in an HIV seropositive leprosy patient.

We hope that you will find this issue interesting and informative, and look forward to welcoming you all back in 2007. Happy New Year!

Susan Boobis
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