CALL FOR PAPERS

For a Special Issue of Leprosy Review on STIGMA

Abstracts for articles (of up to around 8,000 words) and shorter review articles (up to 4,000 words) are invited for a special issue of the journal Leprosy Review on stigma, which is being guest edited by James Staples, Lecturer in Social Anthropology, School of Social Sciences, Brunel University (james.staples@brunel.ac.uk). Abstracts should be sent to him as soon as possible, and completed contributions will need to be submitted by 1 February 2011. Articles should be sent to Irene Allen (IreneA@leprahealthinaction.org) copied to James Staples.

The special issue should take us beyond, it is hoped, the notion of ‘stigma’ as little more than a knee jerk explanation for negative social reactions to leprosy or a shorthand term for a whole range of what get lumped together as ‘social aspects of leprosy’. Rather, papers are invited that will interrogate, more critically, questions about stigma and what it means in relation to experiences of leprosy and its treatment, and which will reflect on our often taken for granted use of the term. Contributions are also encouraged that go beyond a crude split between physical aspects of leprosy on the one hand, and social aspects on the other.

In particular, papers might consider (but need not be limited to) the following questions:

- How useful is ‘stigma’, either as an analytical category or/and as a way of resolving particular issues faced by people affected by leprosy?
- What are the socio-cultural, historical, economic and political contexts in which stigma is produced? Can knowledge of those contexts serve to reduce stigma and, if so, in what ways? (Might such knowledge, for example, be used in different ways in different places by plastic and reconstructive surgeons? Should it? Or, as some might try to argue, do changing bodies to conform more closely to social norms reinforce social prejudices against certain bodily conditions?)
- How might stigma, as it is currently configured and used, also be considered a barrier to understanding the social experience of leprosy? Does the term restrict the ways in which we think about leprosy-related identities? What might the alternatives be? Are their indigenous terms and descriptions in use in more leprosy prevalent areas that might be more salient?
- How might stigma be used creatively – either by the stigmatised or those who work with them – to create new and potentially positive identities?
- What innovative methodologies might be most useful for identifying and analysing stigma?

Inter-disciplinary contributions are welcome.