One of the most widely debated topics in leprosy research at present is the transmission of *M. leprae* between those who carry the infection and those who are susceptible. We know very little about how and when transmission occurs; we do not know specifically how to stop transmission, nor do we have good indicators to show how much effect the measures we are taking – such as chemoprophylaxis in household contacts – are actually having on transmission.

There have been a number of helpful articles in recent years depicting the decline of leprosy in certain low endemic countries; in many cases it has been possible to suggest, in retrospect, approximately when the transmission of *M. leprae* stopped. The most recent paper is published in this issue and relates to the decline of autochthonous leprosy in Spain. Previous papers, also published in *Leprosy Review*, refer to the situation in Portugal (*Lepr Rev.* 1990; **61**: 32–49), Japan (*Lepr Rev.* 2009; **80**: 432–440), Mexico (*Lepr Rev.* 2012; **83**: 184–194), and the Republic of Korea (*Lepr Rev.* 2015; **86**: 316–327). These papers are worth studying in order to understand what reduced transmission will look like, if and when we find interventions that will accelerate it.

Early diagnosis is an intervention that holds great promise in the fight to interrupt transmission, but so far the available tests have not performed as hoped; a paper from Brazil shows that predicting which contacts are likely to develop leprosy is unfortunately still very difficult.

Although MDT has been very successful in treating leprosy, it is important to realise that adverse effects are quite common, especially if one looks carefully for them, as a group in Kerala, India has done. On the other hand, a paper from the Philippines shows that the supposed beneficial effect of clofazimine in suppressing ENL reactions may be less important than initially thought, and prolonging the intake of clofazimine in those at risk of ENL did not show a significant benefit.

The wide range of topics covered in the other papers and reports show that leprosy continues to be a fascinating and diverse condition, affecting many different organs and systems of the human body.

*Paul Saunderson*

*Editor*