A MODIFIED TECHNIQUE FOR STAINING LEPROSY BACILLI IN SMEARS

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The following method of acidfast staining of M. leprae has the advantage of timed decolourising, and so gives consistent results.

Method

All staining is carried out in Coplin jars.

(a) Flame fix.

(b) Stain with Ziehl-Neelsen stain at room temperature for 20 minutes.

(c) Wipe stain from the back of the slides and wash in tap water.

(d) Decolourise in 5% sulphuric acid for five minutes.

(e) Wash well in running water.

(f) Counterstain with 0.1% toluidin blue for one minute. Wipe off any excess stain from the back of the slide and blot dry.

Methylene blue 0.1% may be used instead of toluidin blue. The author prefers the latter as it gives a clearer background.

This method has now been in used in this Research Centre for the last ten months, with excellent and consistent results.

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