

University of Cincinnati, U.S.A.,  
4th September 1963.

DEAR DR. INNES,

Through the kind efforts of Joe Stein and the Star, I have read your note in regard to the new name that you propose for leprosy. I certainly do sympathise with the desire for change. In all our teaching, we have included the unwieldy term of "Hansenosis".

As a dermatologist, I should like to protest more than feebly against the term of Mycobacterial Neurodermatosis for several

prejudicial reasons. In dermatology, we are accustomed to using neurodermatitis as a type of morphologic response to any sort of itching. Although this term means much to many people, we do believe here, that it indicates that the individual is disturbed and there is a functional element to the nervous difficulty with the skin rather than a disturbance of the nerve endings in the skin or even perhaps in the enzymes associated with itching in the skin. The term has a certain amount of disfavour among the dermatologists who do not believe in psychosomatic disturbances. As I indicated, we find this term a very useful term for describing the results of scratching and rubbing of any type of skin lesion. It is not a diagnosis of a specific skin disorder, but simply an indication of the discomfort of any type of primary lesion. To complicate the picture even further, we have swimming-pool granulomas which are caused by *Mycobacterium balneii*. When the individual scratches these things, we call these lesions Mycobacterial Neurodermatitis. In this phase, the granulomatous appearance is obscured by lichenified pruritic nodules.

My philology friend from the University of Cincinnati is out of town for vacation or I would try to enlist his help in attempting to offer a substitute for the second phase of your term, as perhaps *Mycobacterial neuropathic dermatosis*. This would indicate nerve involvement of this granulomatous process and would also get away from the objectional psychosomatic oriented term of neurodermatitis.

Thank you again for your interest and troubles.

LEON GOLDMAN.