

Letter to the Editor

The intent of my first letter (*Leprosy Review*, April 1970, p. 128) was not to imply that a deliberate attempt was made to use prophylactic DDS, but rather to suggest what in fact may have occurred. Both the unintentional prophylaxis and the reduction of the infectious reservoir, as pointed out by Dr. Crawford in his letter of reply, probably were important in reducing the leprosy incidence and prevalence.

Other factors, however, may well also have come into play. Not the least of these, and seldom—if ever—mentioned, is the actual status of the epidemiology of the disease. At what point on the epidemic curve was the survey made? Without better epidemiological data than are usually available and careful analysis of those data, we must be cautious in drawing conclusions about what the effect of any introduced variable may have been. It must also be taken into consideration that Dr. Ross made his survey in 1952, that is, at or after the zenith of the epidemic had been passed. What followed, therefore, may have been due more to what was occurring in the epidemic than to whatever influence the DDS may have had.

In any event, congratulations to Dr. Crawford for re-doing the survey made by Dr. Ross and bringing this very interesting event to light. Let us hope that further studies of this nature will uncover long-sought-after information to aid in better leprosy control efforts.

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