

News and Notes

RESEARCH IN COMMUNICABLE DISEASES—SEMINAR IN BOMBAY

It was a happy thought to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of the Haffkinke Institute, Bombay, with an international seminar entitled "Guidelines for Research in Communicable Diseases". A score of invited scientists from other countries met for three very full days with their opposite numbers from India to review a selected and necessarily limited number of topics having some bearing on the problems facing India today.

The parasitic diseases—helminthiases, amoebiasis, etc.—came in for major consideration. Tuberculosis, viral diseases, plague and toxoplasmosis called forth some excellent papers and discussions.

Leprosy was not omitted. Dr S. G. Browne read a paper on "Some Epidemiological problems of Leprosy in the Indian Context", and took part in a Panel Discussion in which the therapy of leprosy figured prominently. Profiting from Dr Browne's presence, the Health Minister, Dr Rafiq Zakaria, organized a meeting of doctors interested in leprosy control in Maharashtra State and in India generally, at which the present situation was critically reviewed and recommendations made.

Sponsored by Sandoz, the Basle pharmaceutical complex, and the Haffkinke Institute, and organized by Dr E. Jucker, the Seminar proved a real success, suggesting as it did lacunae in knowledge and in effective therapeutic agents. The general impression gained was of the huge size of Indian problems, and the necessity for a greater emphasis on mass treatment and mass prevention of the major endemic diseases. Sanitary engineering and health education must play their part if the problems are to be successfully tackled.

XVTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF DERMATOLOGY

The Executive Committee of the International League of Dermatological Societies, in official relation with the World Health Organization, are making preparations for the XVth International Congress of Dermatology, which will take place on 16 to 22 October 1977, at Mexico City. A comprehensive programme will include invited papers on the latest developments in clinical dermatology and dermatological aspects of basic sciences, symposia and workshops devoted to specific subjects, educational courses, discussion groups, free communications and demonstrations. The inclusion of several names well known in leprology in the list of distinguished members of the Executive Committee will ensure that leprosy will receive the attention it merits in this International Congress. We have much to learn from one another, and it is hoped that leprosy workers will note the date of the Congress in their diaries now. The Secretary of the Congress is Professor Felix Sagher, Department of Dermatology, Hadassah University Hospital, P.O. Box 499, Jerusalem 91000, Israel.

ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR TROPENMEDIZIN UND PARASITOLOGIE

The widespread interest in leprosy, evoked by the centenary of the discovery of *Myc. leprae*, receives further distinguished impetus in the December 1973 number of the *Zeitschrift für Tropenmedizin und Parasitologie* which is devoted to New Advances in Leprology. Dr Browne on Epidemiology leads a series of ten valuable contributions, six of which are devoted to problems of research in chemotherapy and the use of chemotherapeutic drugs in combination. An account of leprosy in the nine-banded armadillo, the Leprosy Eradication Project of Malta, and antigenic studies of *Myc. leprae* completes the series. Abstracts of papers presented are included in the appropriate section of this number of the *Review*.

“CELLULAR AND HUMORAL IMMUNITY IN LEPROSY”

Following successful prize essay competitions in 1972 and 1973, the British Leprosy Relief Association in London (LEPRA) is again offering a prize of £100 for an essay on the above subject. This sum may be awarded to one, or divided between several candidates at the discretion of the judges. Entries should be of not more than 10,000 words, but length is not important and in previous years awards have been made for essays of only 2000 to 3000 words. While handwritten essays will be accepted, preference may be given to typed manuscripts. References should be included as in standard scientific publications. Existing knowledge of cellular and humoral immunity in this disease should be summarized, but no credit will be given for mere repetition of material already published in books or journals. Particular attention will be given to entries offering constructive criticism of present trends in research in the immunology of leprosy, and to ideas for future work which might benefit the individual leprosy patient, and also be of value in world leprosy control.

This essay requires neither clinical experience nor original work; *entries from junior students in the early years of study will be most welcome.*

Essays should be on quarto paper, double spaced, and submitted before 31 December 1974 to

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bearing the candidate's full name, college, home address and year of study.

OPENING OF INTERNATIONAL LEPROSY CENTRE AT CARACAS, VENEZUELA

The Pan-American Health Organization in collaboration with the Government of Venezuela have established an International Leprosy Centre at Caracas, Venezuela, with Dr Jacinto Convit, Head of the Venezuela National Institute of Dermatology as Director. Priority will be given to training and to the epidemiology of leprosy. The centre will strive to develop ways of improving data

based on standard indicators such as the number of cases reported and the age and sex of patients, and will also search for new indicators that might help to predict trends and aid in evaluating national control programmes. Research activities will primarily be devoted to drug trials, immunological studies, and bacteriological studies. A colony of 100 armadillos has been established. We wish the centre every success.

ELEP

During the meeting of the Medical Commission of ELEP (the Federation of European Leprosy Associations) held in Berne, Switzerland, on 29 and 30 March 1974, Professor Michel F. Lechat, Professor of Epidemiology at the University of Louvain, Belgium, was unanimously elected as Chairman. He replaces Dr S. G. Browne who has served in this capacity for the past three years. During this time, the standing of the Medical Commission within ELEP has increased, and the projects sponsored and financed by Member-Organizations (amounting to over £2½ million annually) have increasingly assumed an orientation in keeping with modern ideas on the treatment and control of leprosy.

The president of ELEP for the year 1974-75 is Dr L. Hartegen of Germany, well known for his interest in the Chiengmai (Thailand) Leprosarium.

LEPROSY SYMPOSIUM IN NIGERIA

The first West Africa Leprosy Symposium was held at the Bagauda Lake Hotel, Kano, Nigeria, from 1 to 4 April 1974. Sponsored by the Swiss Nigeria Chemical Company (a filial of Ciba-Geigy), the symposium attracted leprologists and dermatologists from several States in Nigeria itself, and from Ghana, Liberia and Zaire, as well as doctors responsible for the coordination of medical services in some States of Nigeria. Ample time was allowed for discussion on the various subjects presented under the general theme "Recent advances in the management of leprosy".

Some of the newer work on the immunological basis of leprosy, particularly as it impinges on our understanding of the disease and the treatment of patients undergoing episodes of acute exacerbation, was ably dealt with by Dr Anthony Bryceson and Dr G. J. Steenbergen.

The "father" of the symposium, Dr S. G. Browne (of the Leprosy Study Centre, London) gave three papers and guided the deliberations of the symposium out of his wide experience. At the conclusion, some recommendations were drawn up for presentation to the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Health. The Federal Minister had sent a message for the inaugural ceremony, outlining a forward-looking policy for leprosy control in Nigeria.

During the symposium, the Association of West African Dermatologists was created, under the Presidency of Dr A. N. Okoro (of Enugu), and preliminary discussions were held on the formation of a West African Leprosy Association.