

Book Review

Leprosy, Diagnosis and Management, by Dr C. K. Job, Dr A. J. Selvapandian and Dr P. V. Kurian. pp 92 with 16 pages of illustrations. Published by Hind Kusht Nivaran Sangh, 1 Red Cross Road, New Delhi 110001, India.

This book, written by distinguish Indian leprologists, is directed to general practitioners and senior students of medicine who may encounter leprosy in their practice. It follows an earlier edition of lecture notes given over 15 years, circulated privately and quickly exhausted.

While essential information on all aspects of leprosy is included, the book concentrates its 92 pages, as its title suggests, on clinical features, diagnosis and classification (25 pages) and management (52 pages). It contains many valuable features. Against the background of leprosy as seen in India it is not surprising that nerve damage and its resultant disabilities, their prevention and correction receive detailed attention. This is entirely as it should be, and the chapters concerned will appeal to a wide audience. The chapters on medical management are well written and up to date. Eye complications are the subject of a chapter on their own. There is a valuable chapter on occupational therapy, written by Miss D. Hopkins.

Nilakanta Rao has estimated that there are 100,000 doctors working in areas of India where leprosy is endemic. For many of them a separate textbook on leprosy would need to be clear, concise and inexpensive. This last requirement has limited the illustrations which on the face of it seem rather unbalanced. While photographs and diagrams relating to disability and its care total 32, entirely justifiably, those illustrating the skin lesions of leprosy total 5, not of top quality. It is a moot point whether the small increase in price needed to include a more comprehensive selection of clinical photographs would not fully have justified itself.

The leprologist might raise other issues, e.g. the use of the "Indian" version of the Bacterial Index (maximum figure 4) but the omission of the Indian classification with its Maculoan-aesthetic type of leprosy. These are perhaps academic questions for the reader for whom the book is intended, and who is not a leprologist, but nevertheless these could be considered weaknesses capable of adjustment, along with printing errors, in a later edition. All the same this book meets a real need both in India and wider afield, and at the price of Rs 10/- (50p) paperback, it is excellent value. There is also a hardback edition.

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