

News and Notes

WHO EXPERT COMMITTEE ON LEPROSY

The Fifth Expert Committee was called by the World Health Organization from 19–25 October, 1976. Position papers and reviews had been circulated for study well in advance, and the views of many eminent leprologists, tuberculosis specialists and public health authorities had been previously sought. The 9 members came from: Belgium, Brazil, India, Iran, Malaysia, Mexico, Norway, United Kingdom and USSR.

The main theme of the meeting was the control of leprosy in the world, and the members were conscious of the constraints apparent in the future prospects for control occasioned by the twin spectres of drug resistance and persisting organisms. The somewhat depressing atmosphere was partly illuminated by a review of the present advances in immunological research and the mycobacterial activity of rifampicin. The encouraging initiative taken by the WHO in the IMMLEP and THELEP projects, and in the inclusion of leprosy among the major tropical diseases calling for special research effort, was noted with satisfaction.

Dr S. G. Browne acted as Chairman of the meeting, with Dr P. M. Kaul as Vice-Chairman. Dr M. F. R. Waters was Rapporteur.

The publication of the Report of this Expert Committee is awaited with great interest, both in countries where leprosy is a major health problem, and by voluntary organizations that are making an important contribution to its solution.

HISTOPATHOLOGY OF LEPROSY: A TRIBUTE TO KENSUKE MITSUDA

The July 1976 issue of *Cutis* contains a delightful tribute to Kensuke Mitsuda in the shape of reproductions of 17 photographs from Mitsuda's *Atlas of Leprosy*, selected by Paul Fasal. The tribute was stimulated by the discovery by Dr Fasal of numerous *M. leprae* in the pulp of a tooth extracted from a patient with active lepromatous leprosy, and though standard textbooks were silent on this subject, he found it not neglected by the great Japanese master of pathology in leprosy. For those not fortunate enough to possess Mitsuda's *Atlas* these reproductions will be appreciated, and a copy of Fasal's paper may be obtained from Dr Paul Fasal, U.S. Public Health Service Hospital, 35th Avenue and Lake Street, San Francisco, California 94118, U.S.A.

LEPROSY SEMINAR IN EAST AFRICA

A postgraduate seminar on leprosy was held at the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre, Moshi, Tanzania, from 27 to 29 October, 1976. This was the ninth seminar to be organized, and the first dealing with leprosy. To judge from the

attendance—over 200 participants, mainly doctors—from Tanzania itself and also from Kenya and Uganda, it met a real need. Some important topics in tropical dermatology were discussed, as well as aspects of reconstructive surgery, but the chief emphasis was on treatment and control of leprosy. Discussion groups for senior field workers, and also doctors concerned with the making and implementation of policy, proved to be most fruitful.

A rather sombre background to the whole seminar was provided by the reports of the emergence of a disturbing level of sulphone-resistant leprosy bacilli in many countries, and the presence of viable but non-metabolizing bacilli not amenable to standard doses of leprostatic drugs as long as they remain dormant. Concern was expressed by many doctors that the recommended high doses of dapsone, in Bantu patients suffering from borderline leprosy and inclined to unexpectedly severe reversal reactions, might pose a real hazard both to themselves and to the image of mass leprosy control programmes.

The guest lecturer was Dr S. G. Browne, and Dr John Pearson from the ALERT Centre, Addis Ababa, shared with the participants some of his latest findings. The National Leprosy advisory and Co-ordinating Committee of Tanzania, and the governments of the other East African countries, will be studying the Report of the Fifth Expert Committee on Leprosy of the World Health Organization when it is published.

SCHIEFFELIN LEPROSY RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTRE, KARIGIRI, S. INDIA, TRAINING COURSES IN 1977

Once again we are glad to bring to the notice of our readers the following training courses at Karigiri which may be of international interest.

Courses	Duration	Date
I. FOR DOCTORS		
(a) Condensed course for doctors in full-time leprosy work	1 week	June 13–18 Sept. 26–Oct. 1 Nov. 14–19
(b) Medical students' course	1 week	Sept. 12–17
(c) Medical officers' training course	6 weeks	July 18–Aug. 27
(d) Ophthalmic aspects for doctors only	1 week	Annually in Feb.
(e) Inservice training—in medical, surgical, ophthalmic, pathology and control		By arrangement
II. FOR OTHERS ENGAGED IN FULL-TIME LEPROSY WORK		
(a) Supervisory paramedical workers (5 years' experience)	4 months	From June 6
(b) Orientation course for nurses, administrators, etc.	1 month	Sept. 26
(c) Paramedical workers	6 months	Apr. 4; Oct. 3
(d) Medical record-keepers	2 months	April 4; Oct. 3
(e) Physiotherapy technicians	9 months	June 15
(f) Social workers' course	1 week	Sept. 26
III. Inservice training is also available for technicians of all types engaged in leprosy work		

For prescribed forms and other details, please contact the Training Officer, SLR and Training Centre (B.O.), Karifiri, via Katpadi 632, 106 North Arcot Dt., S. India.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THELEP

WHO have followed up the IMMLEP programme by the establishment of the THELEP task force, the first meeting of which was held recently. The new task force has as its objective the development of more effective chemotherapy for leprosy.

The plan of attack of THELEP is two-pronged. First, laboratory and clinical investigations are proposed to find more effective ways of using existing drugs so as to hinder the emergence of drug resistant *M. leprae* and also shorten the duration of treatment. Secondly a programme for designing and testing new drugs is proposed involving simultaneous studies in several areas.

We wholeheartedly welcome this development and wish all involved every success in their efforts.

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The next Number of *Leprosy Review* will largely be devoted to a Symposium on the theme of sulphone resistance and its implications. Several distinguished leprologists with special experience in this field have agreed to participate, and will make this an Issue of particular interest and importance.