

News and Notes

IV European Leprosy Symposium on Leprosy Research, Genoa, Italy, 1–5 October 1986

The main topics of this Symposium organized by Associazione Italiana 'Amici di Raoul Follereau' are: Biochemistry of *M. Leprae*; *In vitro* cultivation of *M. leprae*; Immunology; Drug development for leprosy; and Multiple drug therapy of leprosy.

The objective of the Symposium is to exchange, in the interim between two ILA Congresses, recent information and views and to promote further research.

The symposium is open to those who are already engaged in leprosy research as well as others engaged in other research projects relevant to leprosy research.

Each topic will be introduced by a position paper to be presented by an invited speaker. This will be followed by presentations of original research by other participants and discussion.

There is no registration fee but for further details of the Symposium and accommodation please write to: Organizing Secretariat, Associazione Italiana 'Amici di Raoul Follereau', Via Borselli 4, 40135, Bologna, Italy.

XXXIVth Working Session of ILEP in Lisbon, December 1985

This session included meetings of subcommittees of the Medical Commission on the monitoring of MDT programmes and research priorities; a full day for the Medical Commission proper; computer demonstrations of the latest development of the PROMIS system for project management; discussion between ILEP and the International Leprosy Association; consideration of the ALERT, Addis Ababa, budget and a final Plenary Session. Meetings also took place to make further plans for the structure of the next International Leprosy Congress, to be held in The Hague, Netherlands 1988. The Medical Commission considered: research priorities; the Karonga (Malawi) leprosy prevention study; the study of the operational effectiveness of MDT in various control programmes; alternative drug regimens, including Isoprodian; early diagnosis in leprosy; fixed combinations of antileprosy drugs; calendar or bubble packs for MDT; thalidomide and reorganization of the Medical Commission. The next meeting of ILEP will be in Edinburgh, Scotland, in the first week of July 1986.

International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations (ILEP)

For those who are perhaps not yet aware of the continuing activities of this organization in so many different parts of the world, we record the following information:

The International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations (ILEP) was founded in Berne in 1966 and groups together 25 national leprosy relief associations belonging to 20 industrialized countries. These associations are active in some 80 endemic countries where their work covers more than 800 centres/projects, caring for more than a million leprosy patients. The total annual support given is in the order of US \$35 million. The main administrative bodies of the Federation are the General Assembly, which has ultimate authority and power and meets every two years, and the Standing Committee headed by the ILEP President (who is elected for a two-year period) which deals with matters referred to it by the General Assembly.

ILEP is essentially a coordinating body whose Member-Associations are members of a *working* community. It is the Member-Associations who, in their respective countries, raise the funds which allow them to undertake anti-leprosy projects in the field. Relationships between Members, whether inside or outside the Federation, are governed by one basic principle: each Member-Association is an autonomous organization in its own right, free to take its own decisions and carry out its own leprosy work.

It is the function of ILEP to set up a coordination system (Coordinating Bureau, Working Sessions, advisory bodies) which will allow the Federation to derive maximum benefit from the combined efforts of the whole community, while at the same time respecting the independence of each Member-Association. At the heart of ILEP is the Coordinating Bureau, consisting of a few staff working under the General Secretary. This office, though not operational itself, runs a computerized information network which provides operational data, i.e. data which results in some sort of action. This information is supplied by the Member-Associations and by the projects they are supporting. In return, the network produces a number of documents which have two basic functions: to let each member know what his fellow members are doing, and to allow each Association to participate as efficiently as possible in the work of the other Members, as far as they are willing and able.

The Medical Commission is an advisory body which regularly makes recommendations on the projects being supported by Member-Associations, especially in the area of scientific research. The Commission also draws up the ILEP Guidelines. These are a collection of broad principles which advise Member-Associations on ways in which they can apply ILEP strategy to their own projects. Each Association is free to choose in what area they wish to work and has the right to decide what projects to support. As regards the work itself, however, the Member-Associations all refer to the ILEP Guidelines for advice.

In order to facilitate the implementation of the Guidelines in the field, Working Groups have been formed—task forces which work towards promoting certain aspects of the campaign against leprosy, such as training, publicity, health education, as well as encouraging socio-economic programmes, combined leprosy/TB programmes or Primary Health Care programmes.

Address: 234 Blythe Road, London W14 0HJ.

LEPRA prize essay competition 1984

We record with pleasure the award of a first prize to Mr Michael Seckl, a medical student of University College Hospital, London, for an outstandingly good entry on the subject of 'Antibodies and Recombinant DNA Technology; Present and Future Uses in Leprosy and Tuberculosis'. His award was made at an Annual General Meeting of LEPRA in 1985 and his essay was published in the *International Journal of Leprosy*, Volume 53, Number 4, December 1985. The subjects for 1985 were either 'Leprosy will be controlled by an anti-leprosy vaccine in conjunction with chemotherapy, not by improvement in socio-economic conditions' or 'The relation between allergy and immunity in leprosy'. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Editor of the *International Journal of Leprosy* for his continued interest in the publication of prize-winning essays from medical students in this country. Enquiries: Editorial Office, *Leprosy Review*.

Western Region Leprosy Workers Conference, Goa, India

This conference was organized by the HKNS branches of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa and Madhya Pradesh and National Leprosy Organisation in collaboration with the Directorate of Health Services, Goa, Rajasthan, Diu and Daman. One hundred and ninety-nine Delegates from these states attended.

In his inaugural speech Shri Baba Amte laid stress on the importance of involvement of youth in leprosy work. Dr M G Deo, Research Director, Cancer Research Institute, Bombay; Dr R Ganapati, Director, Bombay Leprosy Project and Dr M V Yellapurkar, Joint Director of Health Services (Maharashtra) in their guest lectures dealt with the 'Role of vaccine in leprosy control', 'Multidrug therapy in leprosy' and 'Strategies for eradication of leprosy' respectively.

In seven scientific sessions 29 scientific papers were presented exclusively by paramedical workers based on their field experience.

Six papers on multidrug therapy which were presented indicated in general that after two years of therapy 54% of multibacillary patients were rendered smear negative. In addition to delivery of multidrugs through paramedical staff, one of the studies also showed that therapy could be successfully practised even through student volunteers, even in difficult situations like leprosy colonies.

Though the national target is to achieve eradication of leprosy by 2000 AD, a questionnaire study conducted in Bombay indicated ignorance about the disease even amongst highly educated families. According to another study, mobile exhibitions in busy commercial points in a city like Bombay could be used to educate the public as well as to detect leprosy cases at low cost. Usefulness of transportable video equipment in medical colleges to teach leprosy was also demonstrated. Papers dealing with varied aspects like the importance of smear examination, difficulties of leprosy control programme in tribal areas, common sites of occurrence of single lesions on the body, utility of sample 'tile test' to detect DDS in urine etc., were also presented.

This conference emphasized the potential of paramedical workers and even nonsalaried volunteer force, provided proper guidance and encouragement are given.

Leprosy workers meet, Madurai, South India, 1985

Following a meeting organized by OXFAM and held in Wardha in the Gandhi Memorial Leprosy Foundation in 1982, a group of leprosy workers from various parts of Tamil Nadu met in Madurai in March 1985 to plan a follow-up meeting. With support from the Bangalore Office of OXFAM, a further meeting was indeed organized in July 1985 at the De Nobili Pastoral Centre in Madurai, attended by 136 participants, 60 of whom were from voluntary institutions, 56 from Government, 6 from community health projects; there were also 14 observers. The main group reports and discussions covered—multidrug therapy; the absentee problem; new case detection; urban problems; rehabilitation, deformity, social aspects; health education; integration with community health. Mr John Dalton summarized the likely value of this event as follows:

'For a meeting of this type it would be very hard to show concrete results; but it is hoped that some of the encouraging feedback received—to the effect that workers returned with renewed determination and new ideas—is representative. On the whole those attending gave a favourable evaluation. For many it was their first

meeting of any sort, for others it was a meeting with a difference. The mixture of workers from both Government and voluntary sectors plus the informal nature of the discussions in Tamil was much appreciated and contributed to the success of the meeting. Most of those attending got a chance to speak at the group or combined sessions and observers were generally impressed by the quality of the exchanges.'

Robert Cochrane Fund for Leprosy

The fund, in memory of the contribution of the great leprologist Robert Cochrane, is administered by the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. It is to be used to finance up to 2 travel fellowships each year to a maximum value of £1000 each.

The intention is to enable leprosy workers to travel for practical training in field work, or in research, or to enable experienced leprologists to travel in order to provide practical clinical training in a developing country. There is no restriction on the country of origin or destination providing the above requirements are fulfilled.

Application forms are available from the Society and must be received by the Society at least 6 months ahead of the proposed trip. All applications must be sponsored by a suitable representative of the applicant's employer or study centre, and agreed by the host organization. A 2 page report on the travel study should be submitted to the Society within 1 month of the recipient's return. Apply: The Administrator, Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, Manson House, 26 Portland Place, London W1N 4EY.

XVII World Congress of Dermatology, Berlin, 1987

We have received preliminary information about this Congress which will be held in Berlin from 20 to 25 September 1987. The main headings of the programme are: special lectures; advances in dermatology; symposia; workshops; courses; free communications; case presentations; informal discussion groups; poster communications; scientific exhibitions; audio-visual communications; scientific film sessions; update educational sessions; question and answer sessions. Further information from Professor Dr C E Orfanos, General Secretary, Department of Dermatology, University Medical Centre, Steglitz, Hindenburgdamm 30, D-1000, Berlin 45, Germany.

XIII International Leprosy Congress, The Hague, Netherlands, 1988

The President and Secretary of the International Leprosy Association are happy to announce that the XIIIth International Leprosy Congress will be held at the Hague, Netherlands from 11 to 17 September 1988. The Pre-Congress Workshops will be held on 8, 9 and 10 September 1988. The Inauguration of the Congress has been tentatively fixed for the evening of 11 September 1988 and the Scientific Sessions will start on 12 September. The concluding session will be on the forenoon of 17 September 1988.

Mr H E M De Bok of the Netherlands Leprosy Association is making the arrangements for the Congress and the first Information Brochure will be sent to you by September 1985.

If you have any suggestions, please contact: Dr R H Thangaraj, Secretary - ILA, No. 5 Amrita Shergill Marg, New Delhi 110003, India.

CIBA-GEIGY Leprosy Fund: 3 million Swiss francs

With the aim of contributing toward the worldwide control and eradication of leprosy, the CIBA-GEIGY Leprosy Fund was recently established in Basle, Switzerland, on the occasion of World Leprosy Day. The fund, amounting to 3 million Swiss francs, is to be administered by an executive committee comprising representatives of the International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations (ILEP) and CIBA-GEIGY Limited, Basle. Only ILEP-coordinated projects are eligible for support from this fund. The CIBA-GEIGY representatives are Mr E. Decosterd, Mr P. Friedli, Dr K.M. Leisinger and Professor Dr S.J. Yawalkar.

Increase of subscription to *Leprosy Review*

The price of this Journal has been well below that of other medical journals for many years and it was decided at a recent Editorial Board Meeting to increase the annual charge to £20, or £5 per copy from March 1987 onwards.