

SUPPLIES OF THALIDOMIDE FOR USE IN LEPROSY

Sir,

We are glad to read the letter written by A Loretto and E Barchi (*Lepr Rev* 57: 76-7).

Our experience with thalidomide for Type II lepra reaction during the last 6 years has been most gratifying. We had excellent results with thalidomide in bringing down Type II reactions quickly.

Now, since Chemie Grunenthal has stopped supplying the drug, we have to go back to the use of corticosteroids, which in our hands are not the answer due to their inefficacy or side-effects. Some patients cannot tolerate corticosteroids due to peptic ulcer, steroid psychosis, severe osteoporosis, non-healing plantar ulcers etc. Clofazimine for various reasons is by no means widely acceptable.

We have also observed that the compliance to chemotherapy is much better if the lepra reactions are treated promptly and not allowed to recur. Also we never had any serious side-effects with thalidomide among our patients.

Being a teaching hospital, good management of leprosy patients creates a positive attitude in the medical students and other staff towards leprosy and leprosy patients. This is important in our hospital since the leprosy is integrated in both inpatient and outpatient departments.

According to the suggestion made by Chemie Grunenthal, we wrote to the Director General of Health Services, Govt. of India about the thalidomide supplies. We are waiting for a reply. We support the plea of Loretto and Barchi that the matter of supplies of thalidomide is taken up in earnest and a solution found soon.

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