

FIELD DETECTION OF EARLY NEURITIS IN LEPROSY

Sir,

May I suggest an addition to Fritschi's excellent check-up for early neuritis in leprosy (*Lepr Rev*, 1987, **58**: 173–7).

After our patients' hands have been checked for muscle weakness, the examiner runs forefinger and thumb of each hand over the patient's little fingers simultaneously comparing the stickiness of the two fingers.

This delicate test gives a reliable indication—sometimes the earliest sign—of ulner neuritis. If positive, relative dryness will be found on one side due to early diminution of sweating. This should be recorded immediately and followed up by a full functional check-up, and of course steps taken to prevent progression of the neuritis.

A similar test could be applied to the feet. While stroking the foot in Fritschi's last procedure, a mental note is made of the relative dryness of the two sides. In this case dryness of the sole could indicate an early tibial palsy.

Once again the dryness, when found, is recorded and appropriate action taken.

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[Our reproduction of figure 6 on page 175 of Dr Fritschi's publication was perhaps somewhat short of optimum quality; to check the sensory area of the posterior tibial nerve, the examining finger should stroke the lateral part of the *sole* of the foot. The lateral border of the foot is supplied by the sural nerve. *Editor*.]