

LEPROSY ERADICATION IN PARAGUAY

Sir,

With much concern we read the item 'Leprosy eradication in Paraguay in the near future (*Lepr Rev*, 1986; 57: 94).

The Board of Directors of the Patronato de Leptosos del Paraguay, considers it necessary to make the following comments:

- 1 The Malcolm L. Norment Clinic under Patronato's sponsorship has completed 55 years of continuous charitable work in the control of leprosy in Paraguay.
- 2 The Clinic works in close cooperation with the Leprosy Department of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare of Paraguay in the programme for the control of leprosy patients through the use of multidrug therapy (MDT), since 1981, in a specific area of the City of Asuncion.
- 3 Our experience based on the use of MDT (currently Isoprodian-RMP) is as follows:

Number of patients with MDT 210

Number of patients that complete treatment 86

Months of treatment needed to achieve bacteriological negativity, according to classification

| | LB | TI | Total |
|----------------|----|----|-------|
| 12 months | 28 | 19 | 47 |
| 12-18 months | 15 | 6 | 21 |
| 19-24 months | 7 | — | 7 |
| 25-36 months | 7 | 1 | 8 |
| Over 36 months | 3 | — | 3 |
| Total: | 60 | 26 | 86 |

Number of patients deceased: 1 case.

Number of patients quitting MDT treatment due to:

Intolerance 38 cases (77%)

Change of address 5 cases (10%)

Lack of education 6 cases (13%)

Based on the above statistics of the area under our control, the Patronato de Leptosos del Paraguay deems it very premature to assess the possibility of eradicating leprosy in the Asuncion area, Capital City of Paraguay, due to:

- 1 The large number of patients quitting treatment due to intolerance, 38 cases, 77%.

2 The short post-treatment control periods so far:

| | Cases |
|----------------|-------|
| 1-6 months | 5 |
| 7-12 months | 9 |
| 13-24 months | 19 |
| 25-36 months | 23 |
| Over 36 months | 30 |
| Total: | 86 |

We hope that the above information will contribute to clarify the leprosy problems in Paraguay.

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