

## REPLY: LEPROSY ERADICATION IN PARAGUAY

Sir,

This is to thank the Board of Directors of the Patronato de Leprosy, Paraguay, for pointing at a report on the Paraguay project, based on a wrong press release. Of course leprosy has not yet been eradicated in Asunción, and probably will not be eradicated in Paraguay until 1990. I did not know of this notice, and I am really glad that due to your letter I have an opportunity to rectify this.

As to the matter itself, I certainly have to make some distinct and critical remarks. The Paraguay Project is directed to the eradication of leprosy and tuberculosis in Paraguay and includes at least 6000 cases of leprosy and 24,000 of tuberculosis. Until the end of 1987, more than 1600 of these leprosy cases, from Asunción and some country areas, were taken into treatment. Under the direction of Dr A Alvarenga and Dr O R Leguizamon this programme has progressed so well that it has been possible to start projects in the countryside and other cities. Both authors reported on the state of their studies in April 1984 at the International Leprosy Congress of New Delhi, in April 1986 at the International Symposium in Wuerzburg, and in July 1986 at the International Congress of Infectious Diseases in Munich. Results will be published for example, in Fontilles (XVI, 11–31, 1987) which is available in Spanish speaking countries. This means that results are well known at an international level. Tolerance of medication was really good. Some cases of intolerance do not have irreversible consequences and seldom caused discontinuance of therapy.

Within this enormous programme, colleagues from the Patronato de Leprosos treated 210 cases. If, from this relatively small number of patients, not less than 77% were discharged because of intolerance, it only depends on a lack of follow-up care for patients. Without such aftercare, a project with these kind of aims and dimensions will never be successful.

In case those colleagues from the Patronato intend to continue with cooperation—and I do hope they will, because our several discussions in Asunción proved how in accordance our opinions were—this will make sense only if adequate patient care can be guaranteed.

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