

## COMMENT: OCULAR CHANGES IN REACTIONS IN LEPROSY

Sir,

I read with interest the paper by Shorey *et al.* 'Ocular changes in reactions in leprosy' (*Lepr Rev* 1989; **60**: 102–8) and would like to report my findings.

1457 cases of all types of leprosy were studied at random for ocular changes in 1983.<sup>1</sup> Among

them 237 multibacillary cases<sup>2,3</sup> were followed up for a period of 6 years. Fifty-one patients had moderate to severe reactions lasting from 6 months to 6 years with an average duration of 2.5 years. Out of these, eye complications were seen in 9 patients.

Episcleritis/scleritis was seen in one eye in 2 patients and in both eyes in 2 other patients. In all except one, it subsided at the end of the first year and in 1 patient it continued for 4 years. Signs of insidious anterior uveitis were seen in 9 patients on routine examination. Acute iritis was seen in 2 patients, and in one it persisted for 4 years and in the other, after the initial attack, the eyes became quiescent. Posterior polar sub-capsular polychromatic cataracts were found in 4 patients as a result of corticosteroid therapy.

Madarosis, superficial punctate keratitis, corneal hypoaesthesia and lagophthalmos in Type II reactions were not encountered in any of these 51 patients.

Examination of the eye prior to reaction, during reaction and periodic follow-up are essential to say that these changes are due to reactions. Single examination during reaction may not show the true picture as to whether these changes are due to leprosy *per se* or to reactions. Moreover when reactions (Type I and Type II) are properly managed, with periodic ocular examination and appropriate treatment, eye complications can be prevented and ocular morbidity diminished to almost nil. Ocular status did not worsen in any of the patients, though some of them had recurrent reactions for as long as 6 years.

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## References

- <sup>1</sup> Rajan MA. FP-263. The eye in multidrug therapy 2- to 4-year follow-up, 13th International Leprosy Congress, 1988, *Ind J Lepr*, in press.
- <sup>2</sup> *XV Biennial Conference of Indian Association of Leprologists*, Vizagapattinam, 1987.
- <sup>3</sup> 6-year follow-up of the eye in multidrug therapy. Poster presentation at the XVI Biennial Conference of the Indian Association of Leprologists, Trichur, 1989.