

Book Review

Hubert Sansarricq: *La Lèpre. Coordination.*

This manual of 384 pages (reinforced paperback) is part of a series under the heading 'Universités francophones (French-speaking universities), established in 1988 by the Agence francophone pour l'enseignement supérieur et la recherche (AUPELF-UREF) for the publication of works of reference, specialized manuals, records of scientific meetings and colloquia, and intended mainly for French-speaking universities and research workers. The series will be multidisciplinary, written by authors from the South and North, and based on research and recent studies in French from various parts of the world.

'La Lèpre' has been coordinated by Dr H Sansarricq, formerly Chief, Leprosy Unit, Division of Communicable Diseases, WHO, Geneva, with the help of 35 colleagues, mainly from francophone countries. The 'avant-propos' stresses that one of the main objectives has been to describe all aspects of the disease, in the hope that students, generalists, public health experts and research workers will be able to acquire, or to expand, their knowledge of leprosy. The 6 main parts, comprising 39 chapters, are headed: introduction; epidemiology; clinical findings and diagnosis; immunology; management of the patients; and anti-leprosy campaign. The central part of the book carries 47 colour pictures of various aspects of leprosy, including differential diagnosis and the text is profusely illustrated throughout by black and white drawings, diagrams and photomicrographs.

Dr Sansarricq has coordinated the production of a major work of outstandingly high quality on all aspects of leprosy. Apart from its value as an up-to-date source of factual knowledge and information, this book is of great interest on account of its penetrating consideration and discussion of some of the difficulties which still confront those working towards the control, elimination or eradication of leprosy. Whilst acknowledging the astonishing changes which have come about (and continue) due to the progressive implementation of multiple drug therapy (MDT), as advised by WHO in 1982, emphasis is given to: (a) the predictable difficulty of eradicating leprosy (as opposed to attaining an elimination level of less than one case per 10,000 of the population, as defined by WHO), in the absence of an effective vaccine; (b) the state of uncertainty, at this stage, of the possible effects of the HIV pandemic on leprosy, and (c) the prevention and management of disability, '... so far, generally neglected, despite its essential importance.'

This book deserves, and will no doubt receive, widespread acclaim and distribution. In his comments on the back cover, Professor Marc Gentilini, Member of the National Academy of Medicine, describes it as *the* work of reference on leprosy at the present time, not only for francophone countries, but also for others in search of a book which is '... structured, up-to-date and written by experienced people.' However, for those whose first language is not French, it should be pointed out that the level is essentially medical student, graduate or qualified doctor; most UK readers will find it difficult unless they have at least 'A level' French, plus some knowledge of medical terms. The price is 280 French francs, but with significant reductions for countries in the South.

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