

Editor's Choice

Leprosy chemotherapy is again a topical issue. Over the last 15 years multidrug therapy (MDT) has been widely and successfully implemented. Now important changes are occurring since the executive report of the 7th WHO Expert committee on Leprosy (Geneva, 1997) gave individual countries the option of implementing two major alterations to current treatments: first, treating monolesion cases with a single dose triple antibiotic combination, rifampicin, ofloxacin and minocycline (ROM), and second reducing the duration of multidrug treatment for multibacillary cases from twenty-four months to twelve months. In this issue we highlight these changes with an editorial by Colin McDougall reflecting on leprosy chemotherapy. This reminds one of the confusion of the pre-MDT days and the benefits of MDT for individuals and leprosy programmes although these benefits were not instantly recognized. It is very important to assess the newer drugs and shorter regimens carefully and be sure that they do represent both clinical and operational improvements. For this reason we have reprinted the ROM trial report from the *Indian Journal of Leprosy* together with an editorial appraisal of the trial. I hope these data will help readers to decide how best to use ROM.

Many aspects of the transmission of leprosy are still poorly understood and the paper by Ian Cree and colleagues in which they combined using a nasal PCR to detect *Mycobacterium leprae* DNA and mucosal challenge to assess mucosal immunity to *M. leprae* shows that both carriage of *M. leprae* DNA and local immunity can be transient events. However it does indicate that encountering and responding to *M. leprae* is not uncommon in the tropics.

This Issue has a very active letter section with continuing debate over the optimum monofilament to use for detecting nerve damage and an interesting contribution from Mumbai on drug treatment in India.

The Internet is fast becoming part of all our lives and I am grateful to John Gilbody for his useful article on how to access the Net and where to find leprosy-related articles. The contents page of *Leprosy Review* is now posted on the Lepra web site and we hope to be putting the full text of editorials up as well. Do visit the Lepra site (<http://www.lepra.org.uk>) and let us know how you would like to see the electronic version of the journal.

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