

## COMMENT: SENSORY TESTING OF THE HANDS IN LEPROSY

Editor,

I have been reading the letter to the editor by Saunderson, Currie, Gabre and Byass [*Lepr Rev*, 1997; **68**: 252–254] and comments by van Brakel and Anderson [*Lepr Rev*, 1997; **68**: 382–383] with interest.

What is missing in the letter from Saunderson *et al.* is a clear description of the history and clinical findings of the 11 out of 12 patients, of which they present the results of long-term follow-up. Had those 11 patients at diagnosis a history of recent nerve function impairment (NFI) or one of longer duration (more than 6 months)? Were there other complaints like nerve pain, numbness, paraesthesia, recent

weakness? Were there other signs of a severe reaction? Were there signs of atrophy? From the data available, it seems that at least some of these 11 patients did not suffer from a recent NFI, but most likely had already an NFI of longer duration. As such, in general, no major changes in nerve function are expected (except of course when developing new signs of a severe reaction or silent neuritis). The point they want to make would have been better served if only patients with a recent NFI would have been selected for follow-up.

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