

Editor's Choice

This issue of *Leprosy Review* might seem quite slim after the bumper issue that we produced for the Beijing Congress, but it contains what I hope is becoming our regular mix of high quality original papers, useful reviews, teaching articles and comments on topical issues.

The article on *Mycobacterium w* immunotherapy in leprosy looks at the published data on this therapy. Immunotherapy hastens bacterial clearing, but it is not clear whether this translates into significant clinical improvement. Of considerable concern is the observation that there may be an increased risk of reversal reactions in patients given *Mycobacterium w*.

Warwick Britton's comprehensive article on reversal reactions (p. 225) emphasises the importance of nerve damage in reversal reactions and the variable response to steroids. Two papers from collaborations in Nepal follow on from this review. The paper by Weir *et al.* (p. 279) shows that even in careful longitudinal studies of T cell responses to *M leprae* antigens, it is not possible to predict which patients are going to develop a reaction in the next month. The difficulty in detecting and measuring nerve damage is illustrated by the paper of Brandsma *et al.* (p. 257) showing that testers were in good agreement for muscles that were normal or paralysed but not good on an expanded intermediate range. In other words we can't reliably detect subtle losses. However, I suspect that field workers will be relieved to know that they are not going to be asked to measure muscle strength on an 11-point scale.

We continue our theme of women and leprosy with a paper showing that in Chad women do have access to leprosy services for diagnosis and treatment.

At the LEPRO annual general meeting in July we said goodbye and thanked Jenet Batten for all she has done for *Leprosy Review*. She was assistant editor for 17 years and the journal hugely improved and expanded its circulation under her guidance. I and several other editors are very grateful to her for her work and initiative. We wish her well for the future. I would also like to welcome our new assistant editor, Susan Boobis who has a background in pharmacology and publishing. She is also a great enthusiast for electronic media and has an article in this number sampling various medical web sites. I'm sure that under her guidance we are all going to become more web-literate.

DIANA N. J. LOCKWOOD