

Editor's Choice

This issue of *Leprosy Review* was being prepared for printing as we returned from the 15th International Leprosy Congress in Beijing, but we wanted to have some immediate coverage of this event for readers who could not attend. I am very grateful to Colin MacDougall for his speedy production of an eminently readable congress report, which gives a good feel for the diversity of issues discussed. We hope to have further coverage of the conference with conference workshop reports in the next issue of *Leprosy Review*.

The review on stigma in leprosy takes up one of the conference themes and gives an interesting frame work within which to consider stigma. I found that thinking about the cognitive dimensions of leprosy gave anew depth to my biomedical model of disease.

Eric Post's paper from Nigeria on health seeking behaviours gives some indication of the challenges that are ahead. A majority of patients used traditional beliefs to explain the cause of leprosy and consulted folk healers. Unfortunately, none of the folk healer consultations resulted in a referral to the leprosy services. This indicates the need to think widely when considering which health care providers should be included in leprosy awareness programmes.

The importance of the nasal mucosa in the transmission of leprosy continues to tantalize and important questions remain unanswered about the exact role of the nasal mucosa in the transmission and acquisition of leprosy. The paper by Sujay Suneetha is intriguing, showing that in a group of patients with pure neuritic leprosy over half had specific leprosy pathology in the nasal mucosa.

I am very sad to report the death of Dr Dick Rees, one of the greatest twentieth century leaders in leprosy. His obituary (p. 403) tells of his work and the huge personal contribution that he made to the lives of many people working in the field.

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