

## Editor's Choice

Once again we have an issue covering a wide range of issues and there is something to interest everyone. Our review paper takes a very broad look at leprosy and I am particularly grateful to Professor Roy Curtis and Anne Ginsberg at the National Institutes of Health, Washington, USA for letting us publish the report from a meeting that was held in Washington Nov 1999. This review is stimulating, poses many interesting questions and should generate more leprosy research.

The question of relapse in multibacillary leprosy is again reviewed by Ji. He notes that even 20 years after the introduction of multidrug therapy we cannot be certain about relapse rates and suggests that monitoring of particular groups of patients will still be needed. He emphasizes the urgency of deciding how best to monitor at risk patients. The paper by Lemaster *et al.* from Nepal shows what a challenge that will be, since there are no clinical features that predict highly skin smear positive cases with sufficient sensitivity and specificity. This again raises questions as to how good skin smear services can be maintained.

Pathologists are well represented in this issue with an interesting paper showing that mast cells are highest in the lesions of indeterminate leprosy (Mysorekar *et al.*) Since mast cells secrete a potent mix of cytokines and chemoactive molecules, one wonders what their role is in the events of early infection.

The paper from Professor Kumar and colleagues in Chandigarh reminds us of the importance of looking for lesions on the male genitalia, an area that is easily overlooked in misplaced modesty.

We are also starting our next major further education series, which focuses this time on HIV infection. This is a nine-part series and will cover epidemiology, the biology of HIV infection, HIV testing and counselling, management of HIV infection in a resource poor setting and clinical issues in HIV infection. I would also like to thank Professor Anthony Bryceson for being a guest editor for this series.

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Editor