

## Editor's Choice

The article in this issue range across ethics, through self care and genetics to surgery so there should be something for everyone to enjoy.

Telling someone that they have leprosy is not an easy task and sometimes does not happen. John Porter and Anthony Zwei discuss the ethical principles of telling people their diagnoses in their editorial 'Ethical dilemmas in leprosy'. They raise the issue of setting concern for the individual against concern for the community and discuss how one might balance these. One of our long-term aims should be to reduce the stigma of leprosy so that telling them they have leprosy is not a dilemma.

The ethical and practical questions around HIV testing are discussed by Crampin and Damisoni in the HIV series. They highlight the potential benefits to an individual of knowing their HIV status and discuss the pre- and post-test counselling that should be done. Training and supporting counsellors is another important issue in programmes that offer HIV testing.

There are several papers and reports on managing disability in leprosy. Benbow *et al.* report on the self care groups that were established in Ethiopia. These were successful with groups taking up management and monitoring of wounds and participants reporting increased self-respect and restored dignity. Developing the groups involved changes for both the patients and the staff of the leprosy programme who had to change their roles from that of service provider to group facilitators. Not all groups were successful at working out how to maximize group success and sustainability will be critical to the future, wider success of this initiative. Another successful self care is reported from Nepal (paper by Cross and Newcombe) where patients have intensive training in appropriate self care, again with the aim of restoring self respect. In this programme, a short-term reduction in admissions with foot ulcers is reported. It will be important to follow these patients for longer to see whether this improvement is maintained.

The workshop on the neurologically impaired foot in Pokhara, Nepal June 2000 has generated two substantial reports, on assessment and examination and management of complications. These wide ranging reports are a useful contribution towards organizing concepts and definitions relating to foot problems in leprosy and will generate discussion and be useful to anyone managing patients with impaired feet.

Differentiating relapse from reaction in BT patients after multidrug therapy can be difficult. Dr Shetty and colleagues report their experience of isolating viable *M. leprae* from these skin lesions. Dr Waters has contributed a commentary on this problem reviewing the techniques of mouse foot pad inoculation and these particular results with suggestions for developing the work.

The next issue of *Leprosy Review* is the special issue to mark the publication of the *M. leprae* genome and will highlight the ways in which knowing the genome can help in understanding leprosy.

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