

## SIGNIFICANCE OF LEPROMIN POSITIVITY

TO THE EDITOR:

Professor J. Gay Prieto wrote, in his article entitled "Introducción a la Rehabilitación quirúrgica del Leproso," in the transactions of the Congreso Internacional per la Difesa e la Riabilitazione Sociale del "Lebroso" (Vol. 1, p. 246), the following "revolutionary" paragraph:

It is also necessary to state that from the strictly public health point of view, the immunological condition of the children demonstrable by the Mitsuda reaction has no value. This matter, of extraordinary theoretical and scientific importance, cannot serve at the present time to establish a control measure. There are (although exceptionally) lepromatous patients with positive Mitsuda reactions, and a malign (lepromatous) evolution of the disease has repeatedly been seen in children with positive Mitsuda.

I would like to ask the following questions, hoping that there may be replies from readers of THE JOURNAL.

1. Has it been proved that the immunological condition of children who give a positive Mitsuda reaction has no value?

2. Are lepromatous cases known which give *spontaneous* positive Mitsuda reactions? (If the reaction has been induced by cosensitization, as by BCG, the case is different.) If spontaneously positive cases occur, it would be interesting to know in what proportion they exist.

3. Apart from the six children with positive Mitsuda reactions who developed lepromatous leprosy, reported by de Souza Lima at the "Tres Corazones" meeting, I don't know of any that have done so. It would be of much interest to ascertain the experience of other leprologists, and if other cases have been seen how many there have been.

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[The second item in this inquiry brings up another question, because of the problems involved in the borderline form of leprosy. That is: What assurance is there that the cases classified as lepromatous but found to be reactive to lepromin are not actually borderline, or that they have not been borderline previously and—as a result of treatment—are reverting in that direction and regaining at least some of the tissue reactivity which it is very likely they originally had?—EDITOR.]