Progress has been made in providing rehabilitation services for those disabled by a variety of causes. Public health education programs, literacy programs, and mass media techniques, have all made progress. Leprosy work has shared little benefit in such progress. The failure rests with the leprosy workers who have not moved horizontally into cooperation with these agencies, institutions, and programs. Most efforts have been concerned with increasing the services meant for leprosy patients alone. This is vertical movement, while the problem calls for dynamic horizontal movement. Improvement in general public health and welfare resources will not become available to leprosy patients unless we relate their needs to what already exists. A climate receptive to the horizontal approach often is present among these wider community agencies. Using logic and tact, fortified by scientific knowledge, leprosy workers must take the initiative in creating this climate where it does not exist. The needs of leprosy patients can be integrated into other community concerns; this is better than initiating the establishment of new facilities, including rehabilitation, for leprosy patients only, a procedure which is expensive and impractical. Business men with resources readily accept the logic of horizontal movement that lessens the likelihood of duplication with more and more calls upon their public-spirited reservoirs. It is the medical and paramedical professions which must be persuaded to yield in their attitudes toward leprosy. Judgments based upon scientific objectivity rather than inherited, emotionally charged prejudices will open new doors of opportunity. No amount of public education can overcome prejudices as effectively as one hospital, rehabilitation center, skin clinic, or private physician into whose concerns leprosy has been integrated. Quite obviously this process of emancipation from rigid attitudes inherited from the past can best be started in colleges of medicine as well as in all allied branches of paramedical training.

Leprosy control will be nearer a reality when we begin using what we do know, when we begin working from the known toward the finding of the unknown case; and when concern for the leprosy patient involves us in determined horizontal movement.

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31 December 1966

The Information Explosion
and a New Way of Assessing Publications

Under the caption "Coping with the information explosion" the editor of the American journal Science, Philip M. Abelson (1), has pointed up the problem of "retrieval" of information from the world's 50,000 scientific journals, and noted some of the current efforts to make that information available to investigators. In actual practice no investigator makes any serious attempt to deal with such a volume of material, and most investigators, as Abelson says, "gamble that their proposed research will not closely duplicate existing work."

Various programs have been set up by governmental bodies, philanthropic foundations, and scientific organizations, to condense the vast amount of material annually published, through abstract services or more accurate listing and indexing of authors and titles. A commercial firm, the

Institute for Scientific Information, of Philadelphia, however, has recently entered the field with new ideas, based on computer tape coverage of 1,500 of the world’s leading scientific journals, which in a year print more than 300,000 articles by 576,000 authors, more than 3 million reference citations and titles containing more than 2 million words, all adding up to an annual total of some 10 million stored index items pertaining to the articles listed.

 Needless to say, no single person can make use of more than a small fraction of this vast assemblage, but he can, with reasonable convenience, keep abreast of what is new within a limited field. More than that, he can keep in touch indirectly with individuals working in his own field.

And here is where a novel idea comes in. Aside from mere altruistic motivations, an investigator must publish his results if he is to become known and receive recognition for his daily work. Indeed it may be a simple matter of bread and butter in his early years. “Publish or perish” is an old adage that cannot be ignored. Thus arise, however, a vast number of minor publications, often dubbed disparagingly as “pot-boilers,” which have the principal merit of adding to an author’s pile of reprints.

Sheer numbers of published articles have often been used in assessing an investigator’s scientific output. The new system of the Institute for Scientific Information, however, through a bulky Citation Index, achieves a different and perhaps more useful purpose, viz., an exact record of the frequency with which papers by one author are cited by others. The Citation Index may seem an expensive and somewhat cumbersome way of indicating the impact of certain publications on progress within a scientific field. Then, too, a time comes when an accomplishment becomes everybody’s knowledge and the original author’s papers are no longer cited. But there is reason to believe that for a time, at least, the influence of an investigator’s papers can be measured with more precision by the frequency with which they are quoted than by the frequency with which they are published.

—E. R. Long