

## Further Information on the Leprosy Problem in the World<sup>1</sup>

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According to the WHO estimate of 1965 (Bechelli and Martinez, 1966) there would be 10,786,000 leprosy cases and 3,872,000 leprosy patients with disability (including anesthesia). The number of new leprosy cases expected between 1965 and 1970 in countries with a prevalence rate of 0.5 per 1000 or higher was 995,000. The data represented an attempt, made with many reservations, to give an indication of the magnitude of the leprosy problem throughout the world.

To obtain further information, a questionnaire was prepared and forwarded by WHO Regional Offices to the countries concerned, and 95 replies were obtained. In many of these, data were incomplete and/or apparently could not reflect the epidemiologic situation. For many coun-

tries great improvement in the collection of data in the field and in the registration and reporting system is essential, as well as uniformity in terminology.

In the last five years over 500,000 cases have been detected and registered in 107 countries. In some countries the number of inactive cases and cases released from control has considerably increased.

It is emphasized that in the highest endemic areas the maximum prevalence rate, as a rule, is not likely to exceed 50 per 1000.

Taking into account, on the one hand, the estimated number of patients in 1965 and the expected number of new cases in the subsequent five years, and, on the other hand, deaths and releases from control, it is possible that the total number of cases in 1970 will not depart greatly from the 1965 estimate. In spite of the shortcomings of the data provided, it seems that the endemics maintain approximately the same level in most countries.

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