

“PURE NERVE LEPROSY”

To the EDITOR:

I beg to express my thanks to the correspondents who, in the fourth issue of last year's volume of THE JOURNAL, replied so fully and so cautiously to my questions regarding the infectiousness of “pure nerve leprosy.”

It is unfortunate that some of your correspondents misunderstood what I meant by the term. Had I used the word “neural” instead of “nerve,”—a Greek form instead of the more familiar and less technical Latin form—perhaps the misunderstanding would not have arisen. In any case the meaning intended should not have been misunderstood by leprologists, all of whom should adhere to the Leonard Wood Memorial Conference's classification, whether they approve of it fully or not.

By "pure nerve leprosy" I meant a case of leprosy classed as "N" simply, not as C, C-N or N-C. In most N cases macules are present on the skin, but these differ in character from the lesions of cutaneous cases. Some workers would appear to classify as cutaneous every case of leprosy presenting skin lesions of any kind. Perhaps the adjective "lepromatous" would express what is meant better than "cutaneous," which is apt to be taken in its wider etymological sense. To define a "pure nerve" case as a "closed" case is to beg the question at the outset, and to make the putting of it absurd.

If observers do not agree on the definition of terms, their statistics become uncomparable.

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