

Primary Dapsone-resistant Leprosy in Republic of Korea

TO THE EDITOR:

In the December issue of the JOURNAL in 1981, the problem of dapsone-resistant leprosy is well documented (¹). We have been investigating the development of primary dapsone-resistant leprosy in the Republic of Korea since November 1979 sponsored by the Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation. By September 1981, 18 patients with previously untreated leprosy, classified LL or LLs, were subjected to skin biopsy before initiation of chemotherapy. The organisms from each specimen were inoculated into the foot pads of mice, and their susceptibility to dapsone was measured (The Table). *Mycobacterium leprae* obtained from 14 patients multiplied in untreated control mice, but in none of the mice given dapsone. The organisms recovered from

three patients multiplied in the mice administered 0.0001 g% dapsone in diet, and those from one patient (a 14-year-old boy) multiplied in the mice administered 0.01 g% dapsone in diet. Since the survey has not covered the entire area, one cannot estimate the prevalence of primary dapsone resistance in the country as a whole. However, the results obtained show the presence of primary dapsone-resistant leprosy in the Republic of Korea.

—Yoshiyasu Matsuo, M.D., Ph.D.

—Hiroshi Tatsukawa, D.D.S.

*Hiroshima University School of
Medicine*

Hiroshima 734, Japan

—Do-II Kim, M.D.

*Institute for Leprosy Research
Korean Leprosy Association*

Anyang P.O. Box 27, Korea

—Yong Ma Hah, M.D.

*Fatima Hospital
Daegu, Korea*

THE TABLE. Results of survey of primary dapsone-resistant leprosy.

Number of patients tested	18
Sensitive to dapsone	14
Resistant to dapsone (g%)	
0.01	1
0.001	0
0.0001	3

REFERENCES

1. PEARSON, J. M. H. The problem of dapsone-resistant leprosy. *Int. J. Lepr.* **49** (1981) 417-420.