

NEWS and NOTES

This department furnishes information concerning institutions, organizations, and individuals engaged in work on leprosy and other mycobacterial diseases, and makes note of scientific meetings and other matters of interest.

Belgium. *XIII International Leprosy Congress to be held in The Hague.* On 2 May 1984, the President of the International Leprosy Association Prof. Michel F. Lechat was notified that the invitation provisionally offered by Abidjan, Ivory Coast, to host the XIII International Leprosy Congress in 1988 had to be withdrawn. In keeping with the vote taken at the General Meeting of Members of the ILA in New Delhi on 25 February 1984, the generous invitation of The Hague, The Netherlands, has been accepted and the XIII Congress will be held in that city in August 1988.

India. *XII Leprosy Congress French and Spanish abstract books still available.* There are still some copies of the Congress' abstracts translated into French and Spanish available for purchase. Cost is US\$15 per copy which includes postage. Make check payable to the International Leprosy Association and send with your request to Dr. R. H. Thangaraj, ILA Secretary, The Leprosy Mission, 5 Amrita Shergill Marg, New Delhi 110033, India.

"Leprosy in India" changes its name to "Indian Journal of Leprosy." The name of this journal "Leprosy in India" has been changed to "Indian Journal of Leprosy" beginning from Volume 56 (1984), and its volume number will be continuous with the present one, i.e., Volume 55 (1983). For reference purposes, the new name of the journal shall be abbreviated as *Indian J. Lepr.* (*Indian* in full in order to avoid any confusion with *Int.* or *Inter.* standing for *International*).

"Leprosy in India" was started in 1929 in the nature of "Notes" for circulation among workers in India with Dr. Ernest Muir as its first editor. The journal made tremendous progress under the editorship of Dr. Dharmendra who has been editing the journal from 1943 with a brief break of 5 years in the 50s (1955–1960) and of 2 years in the 70s (1970–1972). Of late it has

grown up tremendously owing to increased research activities going on all over the world including India in the field of leprosy and reported in this journal. Therefore it is now considered to be one of the foremost international journals on leprosy. In view of its present status, it was strongly felt that there was a need to change the title of the journal suitably in order to ensure that the title reflects the nature and contents of the journal. Suggestions for a suitable title were invited from several leprologists, and the majority of the opinion was that the title "Indian Journal of Leprosy" (*Indian J. Lepr.*) would be most appropriate. This suggestion was unanimously approved by the Governing Body of the Hind Kusht Nivaran Sangh.—*Indian J. Lepr.*

Korea. *Korean Leprosy Association changes name.* The Korean Leprosy Association officially became the Korean Leprosy Control Association (KLCA) on 20 January 1984. Active for many years in research, training, public education, patient treatment, patient registration control and the international exchange of knowledge and technology, the Association's name was changed to lay greater emphasis on not only patient control but the public health aspect of the disease, it was announced by Dr. Sun-Kyu Park, President of the KLCA.

The Philippines. *Dr. Gerrit Steenbergen named new Director of the Leonard Wood Memorial (LWM) Cebu facility.* The Leonard Wood Memorial (American Leprosy Foundation) is pleased to announce that Gerrit Steenbergen, M.D., M.P.H., will become the Director of the Cebu facility. The long-term goals of the Leonard Wood Memorial are extremely compatible with the qualifications and management ability of Dr. Steenbergen.

A native of Holland, Dr. Steenbergen received his Doctor of Medicine degree from State University Groningen, The Netherlands, in 1975. From 1977 to 1983 was spent

in Kenya, where he was Medical Officer for Leprosy and Tuberculosis. He attended Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health where he received his Master of Public Health in May 1984.

His responsibilities will include administrative management of the clinical, laboratory, and epidemiological activities of the facility. Dr. Steenbergen, his wife and three small children moved to The Philippines in mid-summer to assume his duties in July.—LWM

South Africa. *Thalidomide for Behçet's syndrome.* Thalidomide can never be used lightheartedly because of its capacity for inducing neuropathy and congenital malformations, but apparently there are some diseases in which it can do good when nothing else can. One of these is Behçet's syndrome, a disease of unknown origin involving recurring oral and genital ulceration, eye lesions (iritis, etc.), skin rashes and joint swelling and pain. Last year Saylan and Saltik reported good results from thalidomide treatment in 26 cases of the syndrome, with improvement of orogenital ulceration.

Bowers and Powell have recently confirmed this in 3 cases of severe orogenital ulceration (2 female patients and 1 male) unresponsive to other measures (colchicine, antibiotics, antifungal drugs, prednisone except in high dosage). They were given 200 mg thalidomide twice daily at first, with later reduction of the dose to 100 mg twice a day. In the two female patients the oral and vulval ulcers healed completely for the first time in eight years, while in the male patient penile and scrotal ulcers healed and oral ulcers improved. Iritis and arthritis were not affected, and ulcers returned when the drug was withdrawn.—S. Afr. Med. J. **64** (1983) 886

Spain. *International Symposium on Mycobacteria announced.* Following the European Society of Mycobacteriology meeting in Cordoba, Spain, 25–26 September 1985, an International Symposium on Mycobacteria will be held 27–28 September 1985. The aim of the symposium is to bring together microbiologists and physicians involved in mycobacterial infections to exchange ideas and update knowledge. The official languages of the symposium will be

English and Spanish, with simultaneous translation. The symposium will be held at the University of Cordoba "Colegio Mayor Universitario" and Faculty of Medicine. Themes will include the immunopathology of leprosy and tuberculosis, modern methods of rapid diagnosis of tuberculosis, therapy of tuberculosis and leprosy, experimental chemotherapy with new antimycobacterial agents, new knowledge about *M. leprae*, etc. For further information contact: Secretariat, International Symposium on Mycobacteria of Clinical Interest, Department of Microbiology, School of Medicine, University of Cordoba, Cordoba 4, Spain.—M. Casal

Switzerland. *WHO intensifies research in immunology of tuberculosis.* WHO has recently expanded its research efforts in the immunology of tuberculosis to take advantage of recent progress in the basic biomedical sciences. The new methods now available, such as recombinant DNA technology, T-cell cloning and monoclonal antibodies, should open up fresh opportunities for devising better immunoprophylaxis and other control methods. Yet, so far they have not led to a concerted effort in the control of tuberculosis, a disease that remains a great public health problem in developing countries despite the application of the control methods already available.

A comprehensive research program was outlined at a planning meeting convened by WHO in Boston, U.S.A., earlier this year. It was realized that such an effort requires a stepwise approach, and the meeting focused on the initial activities to be carried out. Priority was given to the following areas, where activities and resources at present are too limited.

- a) Molecular biology of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*: the goals in this area include establishing the genetic and biochemical bases for the pathogenicity of *M. tuberculosis* and developing methods to identify strain heterogeneity.
- b) The production of monoclonal antibodies to various components of *M. tuberculosis* to help detect mycobacterial antigens in clinical specimens; the identification of the most suitable serotypes of *M. tuberculosis* and *M. bovis* for epidemiological use; and the devising of

- more sensitive and specific serological tests.
- c) Studies of the cellular immune response to *M. tuberculosis* and its regulation in different population groups, including patients with different types of tuberculosis and subjects living in areas where BCG has been found to give insufficient protection against tuberculosis.
 - d) Studies in experimental animals to identify by T-cell cloning the antigens involved in protective immunity, to determine the optimum means of eliciting local immunity in the lung, and to identify the mechanisms of antibacterial action in host cells, especially macrophages.

The program will be managed by a special group of experts from the international scientific community.

In June an *ad hoc* meeting decided on the award of the first 15 contracts under the program, totalling approximately US\$200,000. It is expected that the experts will meet in June 1984 to consider applications for support under the program. Interested researchers may obtain further information from the Director, Division of Communicable Diseases, World Health Organization, 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland.—WHO Chronicle 37 (1983) 214–215

United Kingdom. *LEPRA Diamond Jubilee.* The U.K. charity dedicated to fighting leprosy throughout the world will celebrate its 60th anniversary this year with a series of events to attract support for LEPRA. The year will include an auction of jewelry donated to the appeal (an Eye for a Gem—a Gem for an Eye); a thanksgiving service at All Hallows, London, on 16 February attended by the Queen, LEPRA's patron, and the Archbishop of Canterbury; and participation in the XII International Leprosy Congress in New Delhi, India, 20–25 February. Other fund-raising events will take place throughout the year. Inquiries should be addressed to: LEPRA, Suite 54, Manfield House, 376 Strand, London WC2, England.—Lancet 1 (1984) 118

U.S.A. *Fellowships in India, Indonesia, Africa, and Latin America.* The Ashoka Society of Washington, D.C., U.S.A., has fellowships available for individuals wishing

to carry out health and other projects for the public good. Ashoka Fellowships are now available in India and Indonesia and are expected to be available in one or more countries in Africa and Latin America in the near future. Private agencies in health fields are invited to nominate individuals whose projects are singularly creative. Suggestions of persons in African and Latin American health programs who might be interested in establishing a Society for award of the Fellowships would also be appreciated. For more information, contact Richard A. Graham, The Ashoka Fellowships, 1519 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, U.S.A.

Leprosy cases in 1983. In 1983 there were 241 new leprosy cases reported in the United States. This compares to 238 reported for 1982 and a median of 220 new cases per year over the period 1978–1982. These cases were reported predominantly from California (76), Hawaii and Texas (35 each), New York City (26), and Washington state (16).—Morb. Mort. Wkly. Rept. 33 (1983)

Leprosy in infants: enquiry and study. Dr. Wayne Meyers, Chief, Division of Microbiology, Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, Washington, D.C., U.S.A., has written to a number of colleagues in various parts of the world asking for information about leprosy in infants under one year of age. His letter reads as follows:

For some time now the leprosy registry has been interested in leprosy in infants. In collaboration with Merlin L. Brubaker, M.D., former Regional Advisor for Leprosy for the World Health Organization, Region of the Americas (PAHO), we are undertaking an in-depth survey of the problem. We are aware, from personal experience and from a survey of the files of the Leprosy Registry at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, of several infants under one year of age who had leprosy, proven by clinical and histopathologic findings. We believe that a detailed study of leprosy in this age group will provide valuable information on at least two controversial issues: (1) The minimal incubation period of leprosy. (2) Intrauterine infection of the fetus by *Mycobacterium leprae*.

As one who is knowledgeable in leprosy we are inviting your cooperation to provide us with any information you may have on leprosy in infants under one year of age. These may be either infants you have personally diagnosed or treated, or any others you know of in the geographic areas where you have worked.

We need as much information for each patient as can be reasonably supplied on the following: (1) Basis for the diagnosis (e.g., clinical manifestations, bacteriologic findings or histopathologic changes). (2) Classification of leprosy, and any information available on the course of the disease. (3) Suspected source(s) of infection (e.g., parents, siblings, other contacts, or unknown). If the contact is a parent, what was the classification and status of disease at the time of birth of the patient? (4) Have the patients been the subjects of any published report? This will help to reduce duplication in reporting.

Write to Dr. Wayne Meyers, Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, Washington, D.C. 20306, U.S.A.—*Lepr. Rev.* 54 (1983) 346–347

Mother Teresa winner of 1984 Damien-Dutton Award. By unanimous vote of the Board of Directors of the Damien-Dutton Society for Leprosy Aid, Mother Teresa has been named as the 32nd recipient of the Damien-Dutton Award. The Award is given annually to an individual or a group of individuals who have made a significant contribution to the conquest of leprosy, either through medical care, research, rehabilitation, education, social welfare, or philanthropy. Mother Teresa is world-renowned for her personal approach in serving the poor and handicapped, and a 1979 winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. Definite plans for the presentation will be announced later in the year.—Howard E. Crouch

National Hansen's Disease Center seminar schedule. The 1984–1985 seminar schedule is as follows:

Medical Seminar on Hansen's Disease
March 5–6, 1985
May 21–22, 1985
October 8–9, 1985

International Seminar on Hansen's Disease

April 14–20, 1985

September 8–14, 1985

Seminar on Hansen's Disease for Pathologists

October 2–3, 1984

October 1–2, 1985

Management of Insensitive Feet: Medical and Therapeutic Approaches

October 23–25, 1984

January 29–31, 1985

October 22–24, 1985

Management of Insensitive Hand: Biomechanics of Deformity and Correction

March 26–28, 1985

For further information contact: Richard J. O'Connor, Ed.D., National Hansen's Disease Center, Carville, Louisiana 70721, U.S.A.

Nominations for 1985 Damien-Dutton Award now open. Any member in good standing of the International Leprosy Association is eligible to nominate a candidate for the 1985 Damien-Dutton Award. A biographical sketch of the nominee, together with a letter stating why he/she should be considered, should be sent to: Howard Crouch, President, Damien-Dutton Society for Leprosy Aid, Inc., 616 Bedford Avenue, Bellmore, New York 11710, U.S.A.

Voluntary payment of IJL page charges. Because of the dramatically increased costs of publishing the INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEPROSY, the Council of the International Leprosy Association has adopted the policy of requesting authors to help defray publication costs on a voluntary basis when grant or institutional funds are available for the purpose. Page charges are computed at US\$50 per printed page and at this level only partially cover the cost of publishing an article.

The availability or unavailability of grant or institutional funds to pay page charges will have no influence whatsoever on the decision of the Editor to accept or reject or request modification of any article. The request for voluntary payment of page charges will not be sent to authors until the manuscript has been accepted and scheduled for publication.—W. Felton Ross, Treasurer, ILA.