

## 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.*

**China.** *Former IJL Editor returns to China.* Dr. Olaf Skinsnes, former Editor of the INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEPROSY and recently retired as Professor of Tropical Disease and Microbiology at the University of Hawaii in Honolulu, returned to the country of his birth in April 1985. Dr. Skinsnes, whose Chinese name is Shicinyeng, has begun work as an Honorary Professor of Pathology at Zhongshan Medical College in Canton, People's Republic of China, and Mrs. Skinsnes has been appointed as an honorary teacher of medical English at the language training center there. On 9 May 1985, Dr. and Mrs. Skinsnes were honored at a welcoming reception at the Zhongshan Medical College attended by Ma Haide, consultant to the Central Ministry of Health; Zhen Qigi, vice-mayor of Canton; Zhang Qin, president of the Provincial Ministry of Health; Li Siuhong, president of the Provincial Ministry of Higher Education, and leaders of Zhongshan Medical College.

Our best wishes go with Olaf and Anli in their new work.—RCH

*National Conference on Propaganda and Education of Leprosy held in Nanjing.* In order to spread the knowledge of leprosy control to the masses and further dispel the fear and discrimination against leprosy in society, the Institute of Dermatology of the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences (CAMS), entrusted by the Ministry of Public Health, convened the National Conference on Propaganda and Education of Leprosy in Nanjing from 12 to 15 June 1985. Delegates came from various institutions in charge of leprosy control in the country and many writers, reporters, editors, and teachers coming from the world of literature and art and press circles also attended the meeting. Dr. Ye Gan-yun, Chairman of the National Consultative Committee on Leprosy

Control and Research, delivered the opening speech. Dr. Ma Haide, Senior Advisor to the Ministry of Public Health, and Dr. Wang Jian, Director of Department of Epidemic Prevention, made principal speeches at the opening ceremony, and strongly stressed the importance of propaganda and education on the prevention and treatment of leprosy. The delegates from various parts of the country exchanged experiences on propaganda in leprosy. During the meeting, an exhibition which displayed the achievements of leprosy control and research in the past 35 years was also presented in the Institute of Dermatology and two feature films on the subject of leprosy made in China were shown in the meeting. Delegates also visited the Nanjing Leprosy Hospital and talked with leprosy patients. After the conference, scientific knowledge on leprosy will be popularized further by various measures all over the country to accelerate the work on prevention and treatment of the disease.—Dr. Ye Gan-yun

**Korea.** *Posthumous award for Erwin Stindl.* The government of the Republic of Korea has posthumously awarded the "Mogryeon" Order to the late Mr. Erwin Stindl, former member of the German Leprosy Association's board of directors and its treasurer for many years, to mark his outstanding civil merits for that country. Mrs. Gertraud Stindl, his widow, recently accepted the medal from Korea's attache for social affairs, Mr. Il Kok Choi, during a small ceremony at the GLRA's head offices in Würzburg, Germany, in the presence of Count Hubert von Ballestrem, the GLRA's president.—Indian J. Lepr.

**India.** *1984 ICMR Awards.* The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has awarded prizes and awards to various Indian scientists for their outstanding research

work in various fields of biomedical sciences. Among the scientists honored are: Dr. Indira Nath, Assistant Professor, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, and Dr. M. G. Deo, Research Director, Cancer Research Institute, Bombay. Dr. Nath was awarded the "Kshanika Oration Award, 1984" for her work on the immunology of human leprosy. Dr. Deo was awarded the "JALMA Trust Fund Oration Award, 1984" for leprosy research.—Indian J. Lepr.

*1985 Magsaysay award to Baba Amte.* Baba Amte of Maharogi Sewa Samiti, Warora, Maharashtra, was named winner of the Magsaysay award for public service in 1985. The award was given in recognition of his selfless and outstanding service for the rehabilitation of leprosy patients since 1951.—Dr. M. Christian

*Dr. B. R. Chatterjee awarded "Padma Shri."* Dr. B. R. Chatterjee, Director, Leprosy Field Research Unit, Jhalda, was awarded "Padma Shri" by the President of India on Republic Day 1985 for outstanding services to the nation in leprosy research.—Dr. M. Christian

*Second Erwin Stindl Memorial Oration given.* The Second Erwin Stindl Memorial Oration, organized by the Greater Calcutta Leprosy Treatment and Health Education Scheme in collaboration with OXFAM (India) Trust, was delivered by Dr. B. K. Giridhar of Central JALMA Institute for Leprosy, Agra, on 30 January 1985 at the Erwin Stindl Memorial Hall in the GRECALTES Training Center, Calcutta. The theme of the oration was "Recent ideas and progress in the treatment of leprosy." The oration was instituted in memory of the late Mr. Erwin Stindl who was the Honorary Treasurer of the German Leprosy Relief Association. By profession he was a journalist, and had also written books on the social aspects of leprosy. His personal commitment to the cause of leprosy and to ensure the welfare of leprosy patients was unflinching till the last day of his life.—Indian J. Lepr.

*State Leprosy Officers and Regional Directors hold conference.* A National Confer-

ence of State Leprosy Officers and Regional Directors was held at New Delhi from 17 to 19 June 1985. The main objective was to review program activities and to consider approaches for disease eradication in endemic areas. It was decided to arrange an independent evaluation of the National Leprosy Eradication Programme by the WHO and the Government of India. The meeting was convened by Mr. P. K. Uma Shankar, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and Dr. C. K. Rao, Deputy Director General of Health Services (Leprosy).—Dr. M. Christian

*"The Macrophage in Leprosy" proceedings available.* The Foundation for Medical Research has published the proceedings of the symposium on The Macrophage in Leprosy held in Bombay 27–28 February 1984. The book is priced at US\$17, £13, or Rs. 125 (includes air mail postage charges), and is available from the Foundation for Medical Research, 84-A, R. G. Thadani Marg, Worli Sea Face Corner, Worli, Bombay 400018, India.—Dr. N. H. Antia

*Training workshop held.* A National Workshop on Training in Leprosy was organized at the Central Leprosy Teaching and Research Institute, Chingleput, from 22 to 25 July 1985. The objectives of the workshop were to familiarize participants with modern methods of teaching, and to review the duration and curriculum of different courses conducted in the country and to formulate task-oriented learning objectives and evaluation procedures.

The workshop was well attended by about 40 participants from various states in the country. It was sponsored by the WHO and the Director General of Health Services, Government of India.—Dr. M. Christian

**Switzerland.** *Tropical Disease Research Program seventh report published.* Leprosy vaccines are now being studied in human subjects. A Phase I trial of a killed-*Mycobacterium leprae* vaccine, involving 31 Norwegian volunteers, was completed and showed the preparation to be safe, as well as effective in inducing sensitization. Another study, conducted in Malawi in over 2000 volunteers, compared 3 vaccine prep-

arations (BCG, killed *M. leprae*, and a mixture of both) and showed the mixed vaccine to be capable of inducing sensitization in 73–87% of vaccinated individuals (depending on dose), vs only 63% for killed *M. leprae* alone and 42% for BCG alone. A vaccine prophylaxis trial, using a combination of killed *M. leprae* and BCG, involving over 60,000 household contacts of leprosy patients, began in Venezuela. Other trials are shortly to begin in other countries.

Ten *M. leprae*-specific monoclonal antibodies were prepared and will be used to develop immunodiagnostic tests for field use.

Alarmingly high prevalence rates of primary resistance to dapsone were reported in some areas. Generally, primary resistance (in previously untreated patients) is becoming increasingly widespread. Arising against a backdrop of widespread secondary resistance (following drug treatment), this development calls for the use of combination or multidrug therapy for all leprosy patients.

Preliminary findings of field trials conducted in India on multidrug regimens suggest that combination therapy is operationally feasible: the regimens tested were well accepted and found to be free of serious side effects. Although it is too early to assess the efficacies of the different regimens, none has so far been associated with clinical deterioration.—(From the Report)

**U.K. New leprosy vaccine trial.** Leprosy carries with it a unique stigma, though only a small proportion of those infected eventually suffer the gross disfigurement and deformity commonly associated with the disease. Dapsone has remained the best treatment, but it must be taken for a long time, it may not be well tolerated, it may not be active against bacteria in the resting stage, and it may provoke resistance to its earlier benefits. It has proved impossible to cultivate *Mycobacterium leprae* *in vitro*, so development of a vaccine has been slow. It had, however, been observed that BCG conferred some protection against leprosy with varying degrees of efficacy around the world. When killed *M. leprae* derived from the infected nine-banded armadillo became available, it was decided to combine organ-

isms from this source with BCG in an attempt to induce cellular immunity. A randomized controlled trial of about 90,000 people is to be carried out in Karonga, Malawi, to compare the protective efficacy of this combination with a single standard dose of BCG and to compare single BCG vaccination with repeated BCG or with the combination. The trial is to be funded by members of ILEP (International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations), including the British Leprosy Relief Association (LEPRA). This trial is the second such trial (succeeding another large trial of over 60,000 people in Venezuela) and could begin, with the collaboration of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, LEPROA, the Malawian health authorities, the World Health Organization, the World Bank, and the United Nations Development Project, in a few months. It will take about 10 years for results to emerge.—Lancet

**OXFAM Mini Pack available.** The OXFAM Mini Pack No. 1 published in English language by the OXFAM Health Unit, 274 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7DZ (U.K.) consists of the following 8 booklets: (1) "Chemotherapy of Leprosy for Control Programmes" (1983) published by the WHO, (2) "OXFAM's Practical Guide to the Implementation of Multiple Drug Therapy for Leprosy" published by the OXFAM Health Unit, (3) "Leprosy" (1979) by Bryceson and Pfaltzgraff, published by the Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, U.K., (4) "The Diagnosis and Management of Early Leprosy" (1983) by S. G. Browne, published by The Leprosy Mission International, London, U.K., (5) "Better Care in Leprosy" (1978), published by the Voluntary Health Association of India, New Delhi, (6) "Insensitive Feet" (1981) by Paul Brand, published by the Leprosy Mission International, London, U.K., (7) "Technical Guide for Smear Examination for Leprosy by Direct Microscopy" (1983) by Leiker and McDougall, published by the Leprosy Documentation Service, Amsterdam, Netherlands, and (8) "Atlas of Leprosy" (1983), published by the Sasakawa Memorial Foundation, Tokyo, Japan. The price of the Mini Pack is £10 Sterling or US\$15.—Leprosy Review

**U.S.A. The Heiser Program for Research in Leprosy 1986.** Dr. Victor George Heiser, a physician who devoted his life to the study and treatment of tropical diseases, provided in his will a multimillion dollar bequest for basic biomedical research on leprosy. The following awards were established and are available.

1) Postdoctoral Research Fellowships. To support young biomedical scientists in beginning postdoctoral training for leprosy research. Applicants should have M.D., Ph.D., or equivalent. While there is no age limit, candidates should be at an early stage of postdoctoral research training. There are no citizenship requirements. Generally, postdoctoral training should be planned in an institution other than that in which the applicant obtained the doctorate. Candidates should be interested in obtaining research training directly related to leprosy study. Initial awards are for one year, renewable for a second year.

2) Research Grants. To provide limited support to laboratories involved in leprosy research training. Applicants should be senior investigators who are experienced in leprosy research and associated with a laboratory providing training opportunities in this field. Grants may be sought for proposals which are both of high scientific caliber and clearly related to leprosy. Start-up funds may be requested for new projects or facilities which show promise of receiving support from other sources within one year

and of contributing to leprosy research. Grants are limited in duration to one year.

3) Visiting Research Awards. To promote collaborative research in studies of leprosy and to encourage clinical experience with leprosy by facilitating access to centers in which clinical manifestations of the disease are being correlated with laboratory findings. Because of the high cost of travel, awards in this category will be made only under special circumstances. Candidates should be established investigators in leprosy who wish to carry out specific research objectives in a distant or foreign institution. There are no citizenship requirements. Up to six consecutive months of support for travel and subsistence costs will be awarded successful candidates.

In considering research on leprosy, the fields selected as among the most relevant for the study of this disease are: cultivation of *Mycobacterium leprae* (Hansen's bacilli), immunology of mycobacterial infection, experimental transmission of leprosy, and pharmacology of antileprosy drugs.

Deadline for all applications is 1 February 1986. All applications must be in English (one original and four copies). There are no application forms. For further information write: Mrs. Barbara M. Hugonnet, Director, Heiser Program for Research in Leprosy, 450 East 63rd Street, New York, New York 10021, U.S.A.—(Adapted from Heiser Program brochure)

In order not to delay publication of this issue, the Board of Directors of the JOURNAL has given its permission for the Index to Volume 53 to be published in the March 1986 issue of the JOURNAL. We hope this will not unduly inconvenience readers who wish to bind their volumes promptly.—RCH