

Regarding Pinitsoontorn, *et al.*'s Rapid Village Survey

TO THE EDITOR:

Please allow me some comments on the article by Dr. Pinitsoontorn and colleagues about the use of rapid village surveys in Thailand (1).

I fully agree with the authors' view that "... simple and inexpensive methods can give reasonable estimates of the true leprosy situation and that can be carried out by the general health staff are highly desirable." Therefore, it must be highly appreciated that Dr. Pinitsoontorn and his team undertook to compare the rapid village survey (RVS) method to a total village survey (TVS) method.

I also agree with the authors' interpretation of the findings and their conclusion that "The RVS is a valid replacement of TVS as

conducted in the Khon Kaen Province, Thailand." However, taking into consideration that "None of the suspects which were notified during the group discussion with village leaders were found to have leprosy.", I would argue that the study provided sound evidence that village surveys in which exclusively those persons self-reporting and contacts of leprosy patients are examined provide a valid replacement of TVS. I wonder what additional yield the authors still expect by the inclusion of those "suspects" in the survey sample.

Despite the apparent simplicity of this approach, it is doubtful whether any form of RVS can be carried out exclusively by general health staff without the technical assistance of a specialized staff.

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