

## NEWS and NOTES

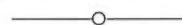
*This department furnishes information concerning institutions, organizations, and individuals engaged in work on leprosy and other mycobacterial diseases, and makes note of scientific meetings and other matters of interest.*

**India.** *BLP promotes disabled meet.* At a significant get-together function to mark the Silver Jubilee Year of the Bombay Leprosy Project (BLP), patients affected by leprosy and other physically disabling diseases assembled to relate the job satisfaction they derived in working together without experiencing a feeling of isolation. Dr. R. Ganapati, Director, BLP, observed that there are several ways of fighting stigma associated with leprosy and to a lesser extent with the visibly disabled patients in general. BLP has found that offering employment opportunities to such patients in an integrated manner without isolating them in institutions is the best way of avoiding social ostracism.

Dr. T. Sreedhar, Deputy Director, All India Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Mumbai, the chief guest, in his address informed that even school and college principals were not aware of the Disability Act of 1995 which recommends equal rights to the disabled persons. He recounted the story of a student who underwent post-polio surgery as a result of which she missed college attendance for more than 3 months, with the principal refusing admission to her although the Disability Act of 1995 prevailed upon all institutions of learning to show the maximum possible concession to disabled persons. However, armed with a letter from Dr. Sreedhar, reminding the principal of this Act, the child again sought admission and was permitted to join.

To Mr. P. P. Hirani, a celebrated photo-journalist who has visited several rehabilitation institutions elsewhere, community-based rehabilitation as practiced by BLP was a novel experience. He referred to the disabled as "Children of a Greater God" and confessed that these persons will spread the positive message.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks from Dr. C. R. Revankar, Deputy Director, BLP.—Dr. R. Ganapati



**India. International Gandhi Awards for 2000.** In order to perpetuate the memory of the antileprosy work of Mahatma Gandhi, the Gandhi Memorial Leprosy Foundation (GMLF) has instituted the International Gandhi Award for outstanding leprosy work.

International Gandhi Award  
for the year 2000

Awardees declared on 1 January 2001 are:

ALERT (All Africa Leprosy and Rehabilitation Training Centre, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Dr. K. V. Desikan, Chairman, LEPR—India, Sevagram, India

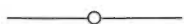
Mahatma Gandhi had a lifelong interest in leprosy and in the plight of leprosy patients. He shunned the use of the word "leper." He actually nursed a leprosy patient in his ashram at Sevagram. He wrote and spoke about leprosy extensively on a scientific base. The example of Gandhiji inspired many workers to actively take up leprosy work.

The GMLF award will be presented once in three years and will comprise of a cash presentation of Rs.2 lakhs, a medallion and a citation. Two such awards will be given either to an individual or an institution for antileprosy work, resulting in the amelioration of sufferings of leprosy patients. One awardee will be from India itself and the other will be foreign based.

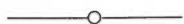
Nominations are invited and are scrutinized by an international panel of judges. A Sub-Committee of GMLF short lists the nominees. An Award Committee under the

head of Vice-President of India finalizes the two awardees. Preferably the awards are given during antileprosy week, starting from 30 January. The date, time and venue of the award-giving function will be declared later on for present year's awards.

Nominations for 2001 should be sent to: V. V. Dongre, Director, Gandhi Memorial Leprosy Foundation, Ramnagar, Wardha 442 001, Maharashtra State, India.



**Spain. Leprosy Course 2001.** The General University Hospital in Valencia will be the setting for the leprosy course 2001 on 22–26 October 2001. The course, to be given by Dr. Jose Terencio de las Aguas, is recommended by the Valencia Community Public Health and Valencia University. The course is open to resident doctors in their third year of dermatology, dermatologists of endemic areas of Latin America, and specialists related to leprosy. Additional information is available from Dr. Jose Terencio de las Aguas, tel. 34-609-60-53-22; FAX 34-966-42-33-53; e-mail: drjoseterencio@hotmail.com or Dr. Juan Jose Vilata Corell, tel. 34-963-86-29-00 ext. 52120, e-mail: vilatacorell@jazzfree.com



**Spain. XXXVIII Curso Internacional de Leprologia Para Medicos, Fontilles.**

Dirigido: A médicos dermatólogos que deseen especializarse en leprología y a médicos interesados en los problemas actuales de la lucha contra la Lepra y patología dermatológica tropical.

Organizado: Por el Sanatorio de San Francisco de Borja-Fontilles y patrocinado por la Caja de Ahorros del Mediterráneo (CAM). Con la colaboración de la Consellería de Sanidad y Consumo de la Generalitat Valenciana y la Facultad de Medicina de la Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona.

DIRECTOR: José Ramón Gómez Echevarría.

PROFESORADO: Profesores de Dermatología de Universidades y Hospitales españoles y extranjeros, personal sanitario del Sanatorio y del Grupo de Proyectos Internacionales.

El programa que consta de 22 temas se

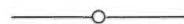
desarrollará tanto a nivel teórico como práctico.

Información y secretaria: Secretaría del Curso. Sanatorio San Francisco de Borja. 03791 Fontilles (Alicante). España. Tel.: 96 558 33 50; Fax: 96 558 33 76. e-mail: Sanatorio@fontilles.org

Matricula: Tasas de inscripción 3.000 Ptas. Matrícula gratuita. Los aspirantes a este curso deberán dirigir sus instancias a la secretaria del Curso antes del 30 de Septiembre de 2001. Se dará preferencia a los que trabajen en Centros Oficiales Dermatoleprológicos o que tengan el proyecto inmediato de trabajar en Lepra.

Reconocimientos: Sección Valenciana de la Academia Española de Dermatología y Venereología. Curso declarado de Interés Sanitario por el Dpto. de Sanidad y Seguridad Social. Generalitat Valenciana. Curso de Doctorado. Dpto. de Medicina Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona.

Fecha y lugar de celebracion: Del 26-XI al 1-XII de 2001 en el Sanatorio de San Francisco de Borja. Fontilles. 03791 Fontilles (Alicante), España.



**Spain. XLIV Curso Internacional de Leprologia Para Personal Paramedico, Fontilles.**

Dirigido: A personal Paramédico: Misioneros, Diplomados en Enfermería, Auxiliares de Enfermería, Trabajadores Sociales y otros titulados interesados en la lucha contra la Lepra y patologías dermatológicas tropicales.

Organizado: Por el Sanatorio San Francisco de Borja-Fontilles.

Patrocinado: Por la Asamblea Española de la Soberana Orden de Malta y por la Caja de Ahorros del Mediterraneo (CAM). Con la colaboración de la Consellería de Sanidad y Consumo de la Generalitat Valenciana.

Director: José Ramón Gómez Echevarría.

Profesorado: Personal Sanitario del Sanatorio, Personal Sanitario del Grupo de Proyectos Internacionales de Fontilles y colaboradores externos.

Este curso consta de 20 interesantes temas tanto a nivel teórico como práctico.

Información y secretaria: Secretaría del curso. Sanatorio San Francisco de Borja,

03791 Fontilles (Alicante), España. Tel.: 96 558 33 50, Fax: 96 558 33 76. e-mail: Sanatorio@fontilles.org

Matrícula: Tasas de inscripción 3.000 Ptas. Matrícula gratuita. Los aspirantes a este Curso deberán dirigir sus instancias a la secretaría del Curso antes del 31 de julio de 2001. Se dará preferencia a los que trabajen en Centros Oficiales Dermatoleprológicos o que tengan el proyecto inmediato de trabajar en lepra.

Fecha y lugar de celebración: del 24 al 29 de septiembre de 2001 en el Sanatorio de San Francisco de Borja, Fontilles, 03791 Fontilles (Alicante), España.

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**Switzerland.** *WHO AIFO Joint Workshop.* A workshop entitled "Working Together for the Consequences of Leprosy" was held at the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva, 25–27 September 2000. The workshop was hosted by WHO and jointly supported by AIFO (Associazione Italiana Amici di Raoul Follereau). The participants included representatives of these two organizations as well as national governments, and national and international non-governmental organizations.—From the report in *Lepr. Rev.* **71** (2000) 524–525

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**U.S.** *The Heiser Program.* The current 2000 information brochure of The Heiser Program opens as follows: "Dr. Victor George Heiser devoted his life to the study and treatment of tropical diseases, leprosy in particular. An associate director of the international health division of the Rocke-

feller Foundation, he circled the earth 17 times on his medical missions, and recounted his experiences in a best-selling autobiography, *An American Doctor's Odyssey*, published in 1936.

"In 1969, he recalled that 'sixty years ago it became my responsibility and duty to gather up 10,000 lepers in the Philippines and transport them to a leper colony. The hope then was that isolation could reduce the incidence of the disease and perhaps eventually wipe it out. It didn't work. Now we have a new system—the clinic system—and that, too, has had practically no effect whatever in statistically reducing the incidence of leprosy. Indeed, it is apparently increasing in many parts of the world. But we must not sit idly by while so many people suffer from this horrible disease.'

"The current world leprosy situation has vastly improved since Dr. Heiser's time. The World Health Organization has estimated that the total number of estimated and registered cases now stands at 1.3 million and 940,000, compared to 10–12 million and 5.4 million respectively, in 1983, and the WHO has set a goal of reducing the leprosy burden to one patient per 10,000 population over the next few years.

"The Heiser Program for Research in Leprosy and Tuberculosis has made a major commitment of funds for the completion of the ongoing project for determining the DNA sequence of the entire genome of *Mycobacterium leprae*.

"The Program will now commit funds in the form of research grants to accelerate WHO efforts to eliminate leprosy as a public health problem throughout the world."—*Lepr. Rev.* **71** (2000) 404