

REVIEWS

[SAIDAPET] The Second Project Report of the Saidapet Health Project. Published by the Saidapet Health Association, Madras, 1940. Obtainable from the Lady Willingdon Leprosy Sanatorium, price Rs 1/-.

This report presents the activities of what has become known as the Saidapet Health Project, since the publication of the previous report in 1938. This project is a cooperative investigation which commenced in 1932 as an attempt to deal with leprosy in this community. In 1935 the leprosy activity was expanded and the Silver Jubilee Clinic for the study of child leprosy was started. Centered around the efforts to alleviate and prevent leprosy in children, has grown a health project whose aim is to make Saidapet the cleanest and healthiest town in South India. The present review deals mainly with the work associated with the clinic, but it is to be said that any success which has been attained in this effort has been due largely to the fact that child leprosy has not been treated as an isolated problem, but in relation to the other problems in Saidapet.

The main objects of the clinic are a study of (a) the causes of the development of leprosy in children; (b) the types of the leprosy in children; and (c) the significance of the various types of child leprosy and the factors which influence the development of the more serious types. The clinic is becoming increasingly popular, for parents bring their children with even the slightest blemish, to ask if it may be due to leprosy. Because it is an investigation unit, all children with leprosy are not necessarily given treatment. The majority, in fact, are simply kept under observation; this group consists of 320, whereas those under treatment number 157. One-half of the children in the observation group are from 5 to 9 years of age, and a third are from 10 to 14 years, whereas in the treatment group two-thirds of the children are aged 10 to 14 years.

When an attempt was made to trace the sources of infection, divisions were made into intrafamilial (room and house contact) and extrafamilial (street and school contacts). Nearly one-half of the sources of infection of the 282 neural cases were definitely traced, and nearly two-thirds of those of the lepomatous ones. The report emphasizes the fact that the greatest danger is contact with open cases, and that where this contact is maximal there appears to be the greatest risk of acquiring the serious types of the disease.

A survey of Mambalam village, the outcaste area adjoining Saidapet, is described in detail. It is shown that, while the gross incidence of leprosy is only one-fifth of that in Saidapet proper, every definite case was found to have had contact with an open case. For instance, when a neural case is discovered somewhere, an open one is almost invariably to be found near his hut. Indeed, the distribution of the disease seems to center around five focal cases, of which two are now dead. Six cases were traced to the three existing open ones, and 14 to the deceased ones. Another feature of the findings is that the majority of cases are traceable to extrafamilial sources of infection. This is explained by the fact that, with respect to contact, the whole village may be taken as a single family group, whereas in Saidapet proper caste distinctions are more in evidence and in consequence contact is mainly intrafamilial. Lastly, the evidence is all against the idea that the poor dietetic condition of the people of the outcaste area predisposes to more widespread infection or results in a more serious type of leprosy.

The following findings are emphasized: (a) That there is increasing evidence that in leprosy a large number of early lesions become spontaneously healed. (b) That the majority of children who are presented for examination are below the age of 10, and that there is evidence that leprosy is acquired more often before puberty than after. (c) That the greatest individual cause of infection is close contact, and that this and the age of the individual play a far greater part in the epidemiology of leprosy than all the other factors frequently suggested.

—R. G. COCHRANE

REVISTA DE COMBATE Á LEPROA. Vol. 5, 1940, No. 1.

This periodical, the official organ of the Federação das Sociedades de Assistência aos Lazaros e Defesa contra a Lepra, published in Rio de Janeiro under the editorship of Sra. Eunice Weaver, president of the Federation, represents the effort of a far-reaching organization of women in Brazil to cooperate in the antileprosy work that is carried on by the government. The material, of very varied character, pertains entirely to one or another phase of the leprosy problem, with stress on the activities of the organization and its branches and affiliates, and news of leprosy institutions throughout the country. The contents of the 187 pages of the issue under review gives an impressive birds-eye view of the activities of the organization in all parts of the country. As usual, also, there are several contributed articles, these being:

Importancia da iniciativa particular no campanha sanitaria de erradicação do mal de Hansen; by Polydoro Ernonide S. Thiago.

Problemas sociais decorrentes do internamento dos leprosos; by Dr. Abrahão Salomão (paper presented at the Cairo congress, and also published elsewhere).

Casamento e lepra; by Solon Fernandes.

A prophylaxia da lepra no Estado do Rio Grande de Sul; by Drs. Gilberto Mangean and José Pessoa Mendes.

Isolamento nosocomial; medida basica na campanha contra a lepra; by José Gerbase.

—H. W. W.

MACLEOD, J. M. H. AND MUENDE, I. Practical Handbook of the Pathology of the Skin. An Introduction to the Histology, Pathology, Bacteriology and Mycology of the Skin with Special Reference to Technique. 2nd Edition, 1940, pp. xx-416, with 152 illustrations, 27 in colors; 42s, London, H. K. Lewis & Co., Ltd.; New York, P. B. Hoeber.

This book is an extensively revised edition of one published by the senior author in 1903, long out of print. As stated in the original preface, it is intended primarily for students of dermatology, its scope being indicated more precisely by its subtitle than by the main one. The changes affecting the different elements of the skin in disease are described, and the more important morbid states in which these changes are found are referred to. It is avowedly a practical introduction to the pathology of skin diseases, rather than a complete treatise on the subject.

Thus is explained its arrangement, which is by structural elements (epidermis, corium, hair, the glands, muscles, vessels, nerve terminations, etc.),

and the amount of attention that is given their derivation and normal histology. The practical worker concerned with the pathology of cutaneous diseases might perhaps wish, since satisfactory handbooks on histological technique are available, that the considerable amount of space devoted first and last to that subject might have been used for further expansion of the main one. It would be useful, however, if the short chapter on biopsies could be placed in the hands of everyone who removes skin specimens for others to examine, because often they are improperly taken. It would have been well had mention been made of the method (intra- versus subcutaneous) of injecting novocaine. The advantage of using the recommended 2 percent saline solution rather than the usual weaker concentration is not always appreciated.

Matter pertaining to the subject of leprosy is found in three places. The discussion of its pathology departs to a considerable extent from those current today. The leproma is described as consisting of "round and spindle connective-tissue cells, lymphocytes plasma cells, occasional mast-cells and multinucleated cells"; while in the legend of the single illustration it is described as composed of "endothelial cells and numerous plasma-cells." It is stated that where the infiltration is densest the tissue is completely avascular, which applies more to the tubercle than the leproma. Tuberculoïd leprosy, said to have "probably the same relation to nodular lepromata as sarcoid or lupoid has to *Lupus vulgaris*," is evidently still regarded as an unusual condition. The maculo-anesthetic patches of neural leprosy are described as without characteristic histology, with no definitive cellular infiltration in the corium, and—most unexpectedly in this generation—they are ascribed to changes in the nerves supplying the affected areas.

In the leproma the bacilli, it is said, are found at first in the lymphatic spaces, mainly extracellular, but later "certain of them become intracellular within the plasma-cells and multinucleated cells." The uncertainty indicated regarding the origin of the "so-called lepra cells" seems surprising in a newly published text. Elsewhere this cell is mentioned, together with the Mikulicz cell of rhinoscleroma, as characterized by mucoid degeneration; this idea is predominant, with nothing said of its familiar lipid element.

The morphological differentiation of the tubercle and leprosy bacilli would seem to be more clear-cut than most leprologists could agree to be the fact. For one thing, the latter are said to be decolorized by alcohol after the Ziehl-Neelsen stain. The methods of demonstrating bacilli in diagnosis which are mentioned are the "clip-smear" one, and acupuncture and aspiration with a syringe; no mention is made of the commonly used "scraped-incision method."

In certain respects the treatment of this subject of leprosy is reminiscent of the original teachings of Unna, rather than representative of our present understanding of it. For anyone seeking information on that matter this book cannot be recommended, valuable as it may be in other respects.

Physically the book is attractive, the paper good, the illustrations excellent, special attention having been given to their reproduction. They are all of drawings, original and well executed; the colored ones are beautiful.

—H. W. W.