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Reply to Dr. Crawford's Letter to the Editor

TO THE EDITOR:

I am grateful for the opportunity to reply to Dr. Crawford's letter on this interesting subject and hasten to apologize to him for overlooking his previous observations on the presence of inflammatory cell infiltrates in biopsies from patients with edema of the extremities. His belief that a sensory polyneuritis may occur in these patients in the absence of bacilli, with serious consequences, confirms my suspicion that the subject of edematous swelling of the extremities in patients with borderline reac-

tions has never been fully investigated and explained. If there is indeed an inflammatory infiltrate of cells in these edematous areas, *unrelated* to the obvious skin lesions of borderline leprosy, then the subject is surely worth further investigation since it may reveal something new concerning the pathogenesis of leprosy, at least in this part of the spectrum.

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Adherent Suppressor Cells in Polar Lepromatous Leprosy

TO THE EDITOR:

Patients with polar lepromatous leprosy exhibit tolerance to *M. leprae* specific antigens in a variety of systems to test for delayed-type hypersensitivity and cell-mediated immunity. We wish to report results of preliminary investigations into the type of cells responsible for this immunological tolerance.

Mononuclear cells from three patients with lepromatous leprosy were isolated from whole blood by conventional methodology (¹). The patients had been treated with dapsone (DDS) for one to two years and had not experienced complications dur-

ing the period of treatment. Adherent cells were removed from the mononuclear cell suspension in a two-step procedure. In brief, the mononuclear cells were cultured on plastic petri dishes in RPMI 1640 containing 20% heat inactivated fetal calf serum but without antibiotics for 2 hr at 37°C in 5% CO₂ and 98% humidity. Nonadherent cells were removed by decantation and incubated overnight under the same conditions. After overnight incubation, nonadherent cells were removed and set up in culture. The procedure was, in our hands, highly effective and resulted in a depletion of adherent cells, which are activated mac-