

CORRESPONDENCE

This department is for the publication of informal communications that are of interest because they are informative and stimulating, and for the discussion of controversial matters. The mandate of this JOURNAL is to disseminate information relating to leprosy in particular and also other mycobacterial diseases. Dissident comment or interpretation on published research is of course valid, but personality attacks on individuals would seem unnecessary. Political comments, valid or not, also are unwelcome. They might result in interference with the distribution of the JOURNAL and thus interfere with its prime purpose.

Lysis of *M. leprae* by Macrophages *in vitro*

TO THE EDITOR:

In the editorial which appeared in the March 1985 issue of the JOURNAL (pp. 86–100), Strickland wrote on page 96 that “Early claims by Beiguelman that macrophages from lepromatous patients specifically failed to lyse autoclaved *M. leprae in vitro* have since been refuted by other studies.”

This statement urgently needs to be corrected since, in opposition to Strickland’s editorial, all papers agree that either autoclaved or living leprosy bacilli are not destroyed *in vitro* after phagocytosis by blood-derived macrophages from lepromatous patients (1–3, 5–10). The existing controversial results, probably due to technical differences, are concerned with patients exhibiting the tuberculoid type of leprosy or with healthy subjects. Thus, while some authors, including myself, observed that blood-derived macrophages from tuberculoid patients are able to lyse autoclaved *M. leprae in vitro* (1–3, 6, 9, 10), others could not detect this capacity while dealing with heat-killed (5) or living (7, 8) leprosy bacilli. With respect to healthy individuals, the situation is more surprising since all papers published on the subject provided no comparable results (1, 4, 6, 9, 11).

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