BOOK REVIEWS

Research Activities of the National Institute for Leprosy Research. Special Issue for the 30th Anniversary. Abe, M., ed. Tokyo, 1986, softbound, 214 pp.

It is our great pleasure to publish this book in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the National Institute for Leprosy Research. Since this Institute was founded in 1955, fundamental studies on the treatment and prophylaxis of leprosy have consistently been conducted at the laboratories with different specialities, which have been extended from 6 at the beginning to 10 at the present. Results of investigations in these laboratories have been published in the annual reports which were written in Japanese only and accumulated to No. 30 in 1984. The first special issue in English was published by the Japanese Antileprosy Foundation, Tofu Kyokai, in 1958, when the 7th International Congress of Leprology was held in Tokyo under the sponsorship of the Foundation. Subsequently, the 2nd and 3rd issues were published by ourselves in 1965 and 1975, in commemoration of the 10th and 20th anniversaries, respectively. This book is therefore the 4th special issue of our research activities.

Looking over these four issues, it is reasonable to say that our activities have been greatly influenced by the progress of leprosy research in the world and that some of them have surely contributed to the progress. These achievements would be the results of international cooperation in leprosy research. The research activities in the present issue are classified into four chapters, i.e., microbiology; transmission; immunology and pathology; and antileprosy drugs. These are not different substantially from those used for the guidelines of Leprosy Panel under the U.S.–Japan Cooperative Medical Science Program initiated in 1965. In other words, our research activities are limited to the basic studies on leprosy, but cover the important areas of both domestic and international recognitions.—(*From* the Foreword by Dr. Abe)

Studies on Leprosy in Bombay. Bombay: Acworth Leprosy Hospital Society for Research, Rehabilitation and Education in Leprosy, 1986, softbound, 264 pp., Rs. 30.

This book is a collection of publications of the Acworth Leprosy Hospital Society for Research, Rehabilitation and Education in Leprosy in celebration of the 15th anniversary of the founding of the Society. The Society has carried out pioneering work in metropolitan Bombay in establishing scientific methodologies for leprosy case detection and treatment. The book is intended to be used as a reference by those interested in urban leprosy control work.

The range of subjects covered by the Society's investigations is impressive. Beginning with an article on historical aspects of leprosy in Bombay, there are 20 publications from the group on the subject of epidemiology/control/treatment, 4 on clinical aspects/diagnosis, 12 on laboratory aspects, 4 on social aspects/rehabilitation, and 2 on health education. A total of 31 authors contributed to the work contained in these 43 publications.

The Society is to be congratulated on the many contributions it has made to our understanding of leprosy since the founding of the Society in 1970. This collection of its published work should prove to be a valuable reference book for all types of leprosy workers.—RCH

World Health Statistics Quarterly, Vol. 39, No. 2, 1986, published by the World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland. Annual subscription U.S.$45.

This issue is entitled Disease Prevention and Control. The two articles dealing with leprosy are reviewed below.

"The World Leprosy Situation" by S. K. Noordeen and L. Lopez-Bravo. The authors are the Chief and his associate in the Leprosy Unit, Division of Communicable Diseases, World Health Organization. They estimate the current prevalence of leprosy in the world at 10–12 million. Approximately 1.6 billion people live in areas where the estimated prevalence is over 1 case per 1000 persons. Much more reliable information is

obtained from leprosy cases registered for treatment since it is based on actual records. The distribution of registered cases, the prevalence rates, and the proportion of cases by WHO Region are reported as of 1985, the most recent year for which information is available. There has been an increase in the number of registered cases over the past 20 years with a corresponding increase in the prevalence rates, as demonstrated by 2,831,775 registered cases in 1966 with 0.84 case per 1000 population, 3,599,949 cases registered in 1976 with 0.88 case per 1000, and 5,368,202 cases in 1985 with 1.2 cases per 1000 population. The article contains a world map displaying the global prevalence of registered leprosy cases and four tables which show the distribution of registered cases by WHO Region, 1985; reported registered cases by WHO Region for the years 1966, 1976, and 1985; registered leprosy patients in 92 countries for the same three years and regions; and the distribution of leprosy cases registered for treatment by country.

"Analysis of Trends in the Occurrence of Leprosy" by M. F. Lechat, M. Vanderveken, E. Declercq and C. B. Misson. This article reviews a number of indicators currently used in incidence studies and discusses their relevance when evaluating control activities. Twelve epidemiological studies that provide information on the distribution of new cases according to age, sex, or type of disease were chosen as examples for analysis of disease trends. Incidence relates to the number of new cases appearing in a given period in a population, while detection rates record newly detected cases whether recent or not. The authors suggest ascertaining for newly detected cases the proportion of patients with deformities (grades II and III of the WHO classification) as a rough assessment of the gap between the detection rate and the incidence rate. Since these deformities are generally slow to appear, they affect patients who have contracted the disease long before its detection. Several studies show drops in crude incidence rates associated with the introduction of chemotherapy. However, the fall in incidence was observed in certain regions before the chemotherapy era. The mean age at onset is a useful indicator inasmuch as it refers to a standard population. Studies of this type from Norway have shown a gradual rise over time in the average age at onset of the disease in both sexes. The ratio (comparisons of rates) gives a concise indication of the relative risks associated with various factors. The ratio for each type of the disease and the sex ratio are in common use. Birth cohort studies allow the respective effects of age and previous experience to be dissociated so that the rates of appearance of the various manifestations of the disease can be observed. Accurate demographic data, use of the OMSLEP recording and reporting system for leprosy patients, and use of a single, standard classification of the types of leprosy will facilitate analysis of trends in the occurrence of leprosy on a global basis.—Barbara A. Maxwell