

OBITUARY

Kumar Jesudasan, M.B.B.S., D.T.P.H., Ph.D.

1949–1997



Dr. Kumar Jesudasan passed away peacefully at his residence on 24 February 1997. He had suffered a total failure of liver function and its related complications, and was sick for some time.

Born on 8 September 1949 at Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu, India, Dr. Jesudasan obtained his M.B.B.S. from Christian Medical College, Vellore, in 1974. He joined Karigiri as Jr. Medical Officer in 1975 and subsequently opted to specialize in the area of epidemiology and leprosy control. Sponsored for the D.T.P.H. course at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in the U.K. in 1978, he subsequently enrolled for the Ph.D. degree under Prof. Bradley and Dr. Paul M. Fine at Ross Institute, London, and obtained his doctoral degree in epidemiology in 1982. Kumar took charge of the leprosy control work in 1987 and he held the additional responsibility as Deputy Director of Schieffelin for 2 years from 1995.

Although there were better prospects elsewhere in India and abroad, he loved and opted to work at Karigiri for the betterment of leprosy-affected persons.

Dr. Jesudasan was a popular teacher. When he was in charge of the Schieffelin Training Unit during 1987–1988 many training programs for the medical and paramedical personnel involved in multidrug therapy were organized and conducted by him. He also held the position as a part-time lecturer at Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore, from 1985 to 1987. Dr. Jesudasan was also actively involved in bringing out Karigiri Leprosy Education Program (KLEP) booklets on epidemiology and leprosy control and monographs on leprosy and video and audio-visual teaching materials.

The Leprosy Mission International availed itself of his services to evaluate the

TLM-sponsored centers while he was on Special Deputation as the Head of the Evaluation Unit at The Leprosy Mission International Office, Southeast Asia, Singapore, from 1991 to 1993.

Dr. Jesudasan had also served as WHO Short Term Consultant on many occasions for the Western Pacific Regional Office and Southeast Asia Regional Office and developed a module for the implementation of MDT in many countries in these regions. He also evaluated their NLEP in counties such as Papua New Guinea, Fiji, the Cook Islands, Mariana and the Marshall Islands, etc.

Dr. Jesudasan was a prominent member of various associations, such as the Indian Association of Leprologists, International Leprosy Association, Christian Medical Association of India and American College of Preventive Medicine.

He was an active researcher and was the Principal Investigator of many research projects. He was the Member of the Evaluation Team on NLEP and Consultant Leprologist of GOI/WHO during 1988–1990. He had attended many national and international conferences and contributed over 28 oral/poster presentations. About 23 papers as principal author and 15 papers as co-author were published in accredited national and international journals.

For his distinguished work in the leprosy field Dr. Jesudasan received the best presentation award at the Biennial Conference of the IAL, 1986; WHO Travel Fellowship to U.K., The Philippines and Ethiopia, 1986; Robert Cochrane Award for Research at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, U.K. during the year 1989; and the best poster presentation at the Conference at Sweden on "Quality of Health Care" in 1990.

He is survived by his wife, Usha, a freelance journalist, and three children, James (14), John (11), and Mallika (1½).

—Dr. P. S. S. Sudar Rao