

Poster Presentations Psychosocial Aspects

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Life Histories of People Affected with Leprosy and Subjected to Compulsory Isolation : Emotional and Social Effects

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For many years, people affected with leprosy were excluded from society by being compulsorily isolated in big leproseriums. This work aims at identifying the emotional and social burden upon people affected by leprosy and subjected to compulsory isolation in leproseriums in Brazil. The approach was qualitative, based on oral accounts using interviews with ex-residents in leproseriums as a technique, and 15 people were interviewed. The transcribed material was selected with the purpose of identifying emotional and social burden, and the most significant themes resulting from the interviews were organized. The results showed that those isolated had been abruptly withdrawn from their homes, segregated and shunned by society, separated from their families, and had their newborn babies taken away from their arms. Therefore, such reports enable to know such persons' emotional and social trajectory, in addition to being a relevant knowledge source and historic documentation. Such life histories are confounded with the history of leprosy in Brazil. **Keywords** : leprosy, isolation.

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Factors Associated with Low Self-Esteem Among Leprosy Affected Persons in Bara District, Nepal

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This study seeks the factors related with lowering of self-esteem among leprosy affected persons of Jeetpur VDC of Bara district. A pre-tested interview-schedule on self-esteem was used to collect necessary data on a sample of 50 patients. In 94%, the disease was known to the family, of which in 53%, the relationship was not changed. 17% thought that they gained more support. 26% did not disclose to their relatives and neighbors due to the fear of rejection. In 42%, there was significant lowering of self-esteem, due to fear of deformity, stigma, and uncertainty of future or difficulty in social relationships. Age groups (50-59), Very poor economic conditions, marital status and treatment status are factors in patients who have lost self-esteem. **Key words**: low self esteem, low self esteem in leprosy.

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Reasons for People Affected by Leprosy Joining A Leprosarium in the Noughties in Nepal

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This study was done to explore factors influencing leprosy patients, in choosing institutional living. Semi-structured interviews were conducted on a one to one basis among 38 patients who gained residence and a ration in Khokana during 2000-2006 using a structured interview form. **Results** : The average age of patients entering Khokana was 56 years. 14 were female (41%). The average length of time each person was affected by Leprosy was 36.3 years; with only 5 patients who were affected for less than 20 years. 3 people had WHO grade I deformity and the remaining 31 had grade II. Two of the people with grade I Leprosy were married to another person affected by Leprosy. 12 people had no contact with their family (35%). 16 people came with a family member and the other 16 came alone. 1 of those in the later group later married, and another was joined by his sons at a later date. 25 (73%) people gave the principal reason for gaining a place in Khokana as food security (including those whose disability made them unable to work). 6 (17%) gave community or family rejection as their reason for choosing to live there. 2 people said that ease of availability of medical treatment was their deciding factor and 1 patient didn't answer. **Conclusion** : Meeting of people's basic needs (i.e., food, shelter, children's security) rather than stigma or community rejection is the main cause of people choosing to live in Khokana in the last 7 years. Newly admitted people are mostly elderly, with bad deformity and have been affected by Leprosy for many years. **Key words** : reasons for joining leproserium.

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Perception of Children of People with Leprosy about Future Life

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Numerous papers have been published regarding the physical, social, economical and psychological condition of people with leprosy. But there are rare publication regarding future of the children of parents with leprosy. There are three institutions in Kathmandu. About four hundred families affected by leprosy have taken refuge in these institutions. Khokana Leprosarium is supported by Government and other two are under management of national NGO. Government provides food and accommodation to an individual irrespective of family size. Government does not have provision of income generating activities in this institution. Few question "How to educate children" and "How will survive the children in tough competitive world" poses challenges to the residents. Khokana Leprosarium is accessible by public transportation from Kathmandu city. In this study, children, who are living in the institution and age between fifteen and thirty years, are included. This study aimed to explore the perception of those children, as they have to leave the Institution at the condition of death of his/her parent(s), who is receiving grants. Those children self filled up the questionnaire. Some information was collected through interview and FGD with the children and parents. **Key words** : people with leprosy, people affected by leprosy, catch them young.

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Counseling Needs for the People Affected with Leprosy

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Introduction : Counseling was introduced as a new initiative in the hospital from 2002. Since then it has been an important part of patient care in the hospital and initially it was only for people with Leprosy. As it is important in the area of patient care which helps to cope with their problems and so it must be emphasized in every hospital. **Methods** : Two cases were studied in detail. **Results** : In these two case studies we found that the patients shared misconceptions about their disease, which lead to depression. Also, their family members had misconceptions and fear about the disease, which needed to be dealt with. So when they went through counseling their attitude about the disease changed and they were more confident then before and also their relationship with the relatives restored. **Conclusion** : As we see that Leprosy affects the life of people and they face psycho-social problems. To cope with this counseling plays an important role for them, which could help them to solve their problems and so it must be emphasized in giving holistic care to the patients. **Key words** : Counseling needs, leprosy.

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Insights into the Life in a Former Leprosy Colony : Results from Focus Group Discussions

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To take a deeper look at daily life in a former leprosy colony in northeast Brazil, we performed two focus groups with 18 residents in total. Participants related the colony as being "their place", where they felt free to be as they are, whereas society "outside" was generally perceived as exclusive and with preconceptions. The safety and tranquility of the colony was mentioned by some, whereas others criticized social exclusion and lack of cultural life. Especially younger participants felt stigmatized and stressed difficulties of finding an employment. Many participants had experienced situations of humiliation - some showed deep grief and resignation, others were outraged. A controversial discussion emerged on the question whether the colony's administration was responsible for leisure activities or not. The administration was perceived as a paternalistic institution, not representing their interests properly. The discussions were very lively and emotional, showing the affliction people have experienced for years. Measures need to be taken to fight stigmatization, and to strengthen self-confidence of the residents. They need support to become active in claiming their interests.

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The Social and Psychological Affects of Leprosy : How a Strong Support System and One's Empowerment Can Make a Difference

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The social and psychological affects of leprosy are sometimes more painful than the disease itself. It is also permanent—it can neither be eradicated nor cured. The medications used to treat leprosy and control its reactions such as clofazimine and prednisone can cause side effects like changes in ones complexion and weight gain, as well as new medical problems that also need treatment. These physical changes in your body can be a driving force in telling family and friends about your illness, risking rejection and isolation, or having to come up with constant explanations that are not true, if you decide not to share your illness with others. All of these realities compounded with the uncertainty of one's length of treatment time, the impact being ill can have on your job, family, and every other aspect of your life can cause a person's mental and emotional state to suffer greatly, as well as their self-esteem. A strong support system and the empowerment that comes with learning about one's illness can make all the difference in becoming healthy and staying that way.

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Depression and its Influential Factors Among Hospitalized Cured Leprosy

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Objective : To study the depression and its influential factors of hospitalized cured leprosy cases. **Methods :** Self depression scale (SDS) was administered to 120 lepers lived in Zhejiang Leprosarium, China. And 12 relevant factors, including sex, age, education, marriage, health status, economical level and human relations, et ai, were collected. **Results :** Depression was commonly seen in cured leprosy cases, with a rate of 25% (30/120). 73.33% depression cases were with mild depression level. There was no statistical difference between the depression scores of lepers and that of norms. We found that the main influential factors of depression were age, health status and human relation. **Conclusion :** The patients lived in leprosy colony are also invaded by the depression, similar to the social persons. Taking measures to change the health status and community circumstances of leprosy can improve their metal health status. **Key words :** Leprosy, Depression, Influential factors, Self depression scale (SDS).

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Alexithymia and its Relevant Factors in Cured Patients Lived in Leprosy Colony

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Objective : To investigate the alexithymia and its affected factors in cured patients of leprosarium. **Method :** 120 cured lepers were tested with Toronto Alexithymia Scale -26, and the results were analyzed with SPSS 12.0 **Result :** The scores of alexithymia and its factor 1, 2, 4 were higher than those of norm, while that of factor 3 is lower than that of norm. The main relevant factors of alexithymia were general health status, life satisfactory, interpersonal relationship. **Conclusion :** Alexithymia is more likely to be a status response to leprosy and its related psychological and social factors. We must take alexithymia in lepers seriously, eliminate the affected factors, and carryon psychological intervention, to improve the health levels of lepers. **Key words :** Leprosy, alexithymia, relevant factor.