UNDERNUTRITION AMONG CURED LEPROSY PATIENTS

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Persons suffering from stigmatized diseases such as Leprosy, become, socioeconomically disadvantaged, making them undernourished and malnourished.

In this post-MDT era where integrated leprosy services are freely available, it is essential that we assess the problems of under nutrition among cured leprosy patients and

Seek suitable solutions.
STUDY DESIGN & METHODS

- A random sample of MB Leprosy patients, who completed the stipulated course of MDT at a Referral Hospital in Delhi, India, were compared with a matched control of non-leprosy patients.

- Body Mass Index (BMI), was considered a valid indicator of nutritional status.

- Heights and Weights were measured using standardized equipment.

- BMI calculated using the formula: \( \frac{\text{Weight (kg)}}{\text{Height}^2 \text{ (m)}} \)

- BMI less than 18.5 was considered undernourished.
SAMPLES STUDIED

- Random Sample of 90 leprosy patients Released From Treatment (RFT) were compared to

- Random matched sample of 100 non leprosy patients from the same hospital.
Using the cut-off point of BMI <18.5,
32% of RFT patients are undernourished as compared to only 9% without leprosy, the difference statistically highly significant (p<0.01)
The differential was also evident in broad age-groups and gender.
Under nutrition among RFT patients significantly higher compared to Non-leprosy patients in males and females:

- Female RFT 33.3 Nonleprosy 9.8 Male
- RFT 32.1 Non Leprosy 8.16

Differences statistically significant.
RFT patients with grade 2 disability had significantly higher undernutrition (BMI<18.5 was 35.4 as compared to 0% among those without grade 2 disability. (p<0.01)
The mean (SE) of BMI among those with and without grade 2 disability was 20.4(0.4) and 23.0(1.0), the difference statistically significant (p<0.05).
• Significantly higher under nutrition when HB level <10 gm among RFT cases compared to Non leprosy
CONCLUSIONS

✓ Under nutrition is widely prevalent among cured leprosy patients, especially those with grade 2 disabilities, and

✓ Require proper medical and public health care to prevent further complications.