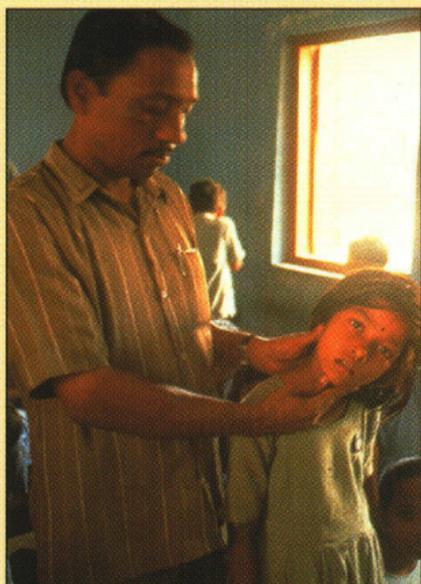
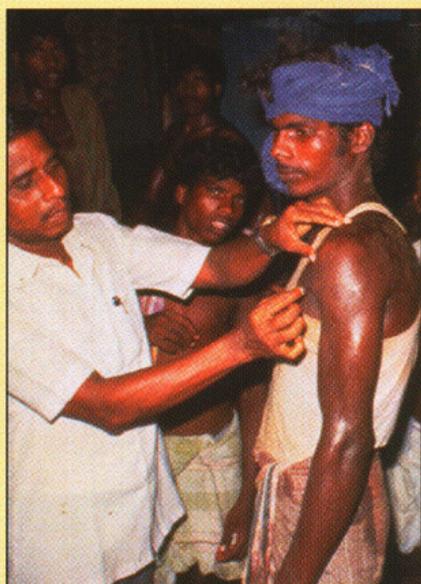


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WHO/CDS/CPE/SMT/2001.5

Let's promote



WHAT IS LEPROSY?

Leprosy is a disease caused by a bacterium called *Mycobacterium leprae*. It mainly affects the skin and nerves. It (the bacterium) multiplies very slowly. The incubation period is about five years.

Leprosy is not highly infectious. It is transmitted via droplets from the nose and mouth during close and frequent contacts with persons infected with the bacterium.

What are the facts about leprosy?

Leprosy is a curable disease. Treatment provided in the early stages averts disability.

Leprosy can easily be diagnosed on the basis of clinical signs, with minimal training.

What impact does leprosy have?

The established prevalence of leprosy is still very high in the 10 most endemic countries. These countries represent approximately 90% of the global leprosy burden.

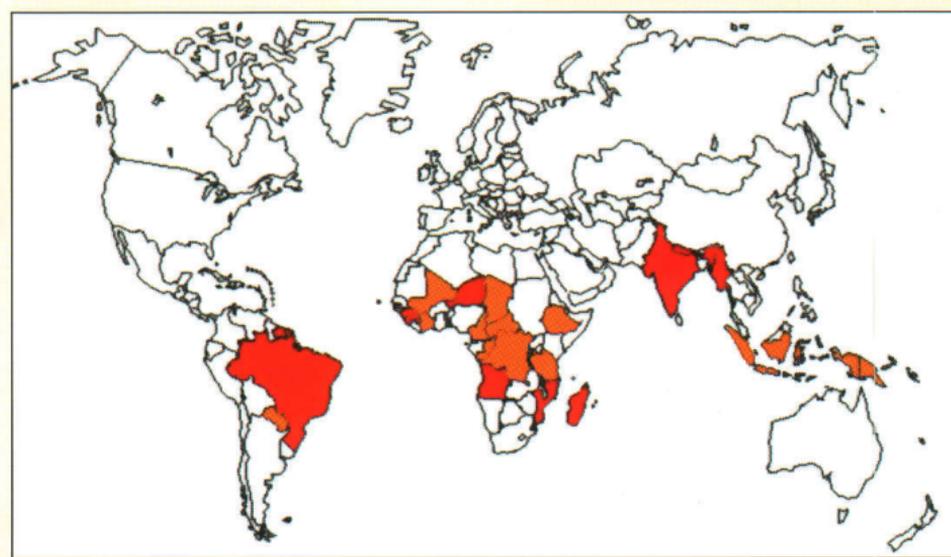
It is estimated that 2.5 million patients with leprosy will be detected between 2000 and 2005.

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES TO PREVENT AND CONTROL LEPROSY?

The final push to eliminate leprosy

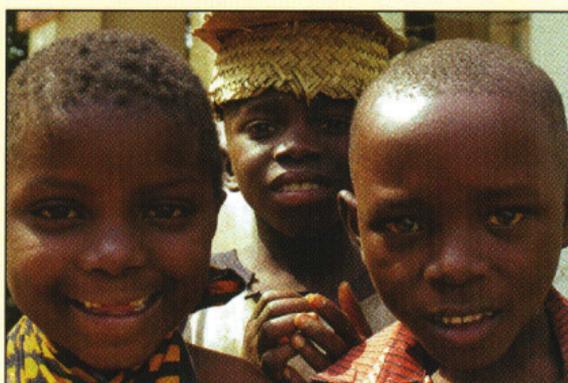
WHO and its partners aim to detect and cure all the remaining leprosy cases in the world—according to current estimates, 2.5–2.8 million—by the year 2005.

Leprosy in the world, 2000



Prevalence per 10 000:

- > 2
- 1-2
- < 1



- **Conduct a situation analysis** to adapt theory to field reality and to develop a detailed plan of action.
- **Play a catalytic role** and develop a network of focal points at national level; assist with data collection and analysis; improve MDT distribution systems.
- **Provide managerial, technical and logistical support** to local health services.

WHAT ARE THE FUTURE ACTIONS PLANNED AGAINST LEPROSY?

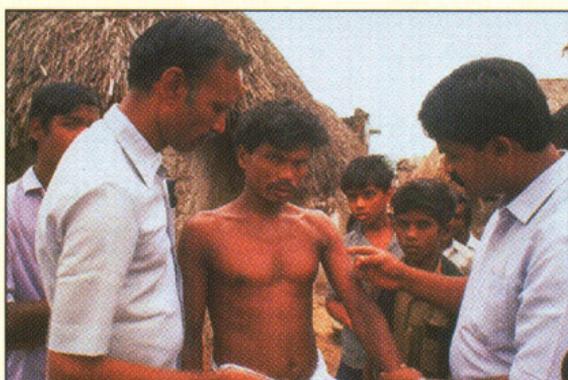
The four major spheres of activity in the leprosy elimination programme are:

- Reducing the reservoir of infection by improving access to MDT services.
- Curing patients and preventing suffering and disabilities.
- Providing essential technical support.
- Phasing out.

Years 2001–2003: Intensive implementation at the district level including integration of leprosy services into general health services.

Years 2004–2005: Phasing out and evaluation of elimination at national level.

Year 2006 and beyond: Local health services provide care to new cases and to disabled patients with a history of leprosy.





What about control strategies?

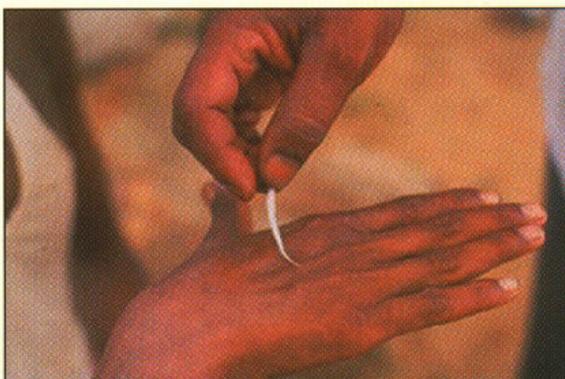
Multidrug therapy (MDT) has proved to be highly effective in curing leprosy. MDT is safe, free of charge and easy to administer under field conditions.

- Patients treated with MDT can be cured within 6–12 months.
- Patients are no longer infectious after the first dose of MDT.
- There is virtually no recurrence of the disease after MDT treatment is completed.
- No resistance to MDT has been detected.
- Early detection and treatment with MDT have prevented 2–3 million people from being disabled. This indicates the cost-effectiveness of MDT as a health intervention.

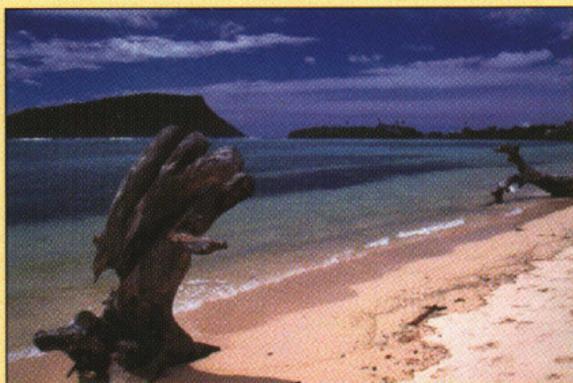
WHAT ARE THE ONGOING ACTIONS AGAINST LEPROSY?

On 15 November 1999, representatives of leprosy-endemic countries, the Nippon Foundation, Novartis, the International Federation of the Anti-Leprosy Associations (ILEP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) announced a Global Alliance to eliminate leprosy as a public health problem from every country by the year 2005.

The Global Alliance for Leprosy Elimination aims to set up national task forces comprising representatives from the respective ministries of health, WHO and other partners in order to:



Sensory testing to diagnose leprosy



This small island off Upolu's southeast coast (Fiji) was briefly used as a leprosy colony in the early part of the 19th century.

PROGRESS MADE SO FAR

Over the past 15 years (1985–2000), about 11 million people have been cured of leprosy. Prevalence has dropped by 85% to reach 1.3 per 10 000 inhabitants. Leprosy has been eliminated from 98 countries. At the beginning of the year 2000, there were about 750 000 patients registered in the world and in the course of the year 1999 about 738 000 new cases were detected. The progress made has been far

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