

NEWS

Progress in Costa Rica

In Costa Rica (1978) the "Departamento de Lucha Contra la Lepra" was renamed "Departamento de Dermatología Sanitaria", with the fundamental idea of banishing the pejorative "lepra", according to Dr. Harry Hidalgo Hidalgo, Director of the "Departamento".

In 1974 new admissions into the "Sanatório las Mercedes" were prohibited and ambulatory treatment was extended to all hanseniasis patients. In March 1979, only 22 patients remained in the "Sanatório"; these were put into foster homes, subsidized by the government, and the "Sanatório" was closed on the 30th of that month.

Commenting on the event, Professor Elfrén Solano Aguilar publicly stated that compulsory isolation is an "aggression to human dignity, based on myth and prejudice". "The 'Sanatório las Mercedes' was an ignominy to our scientific and human standing."

The noxious role of "stigmatizing charity" was also focused by Prof. Solano Aguilar. "There have always been in Costa

Rica and abroad, groups of well-meaning persons, a few professionals and women of high social standing, willing to help and to cooperate. However, together with their great philanthropic spirit they bring a mass of prejudices, disorganized opinion and notions based on fragmentary knowledge and limited experience, put at the service of the "wretched leper". Due to their position, those persons, involuntarily, project their negative attitude on other persons and on government circles, thus obstructing and complicating the campaign, instead of helping it."

The end of the "Sanatório las Mercedes" was the result of the plans and efforts of Drs. Herman Weinstock W. (former Minister of Health), Orlando Jaramillo Antillon (dermatologist), Harry Hidalgo Hidalgo (Director of the new "Departamento de Dermatología Sanitaria"), Carmelo Calvosa Chacon (present Minister of Health), Jorge Arias Sobrado (Technical Vice-Minister) and Elfrén Solano Aguilar (professor of dermatology). The "Asociación Costarricense de Dermatología" praised the government for this decision.

New Techniques and New Terminology in Bolivia

A "Manual of Technical Norms and Administrative Procedures for the Control of Hansen's Disease" has been issued in 1979 by the National Division of Epide-

miology of the Bolivian Ministry of Social Welfare and Public Health.

The "Manual" was written by Dr. Angel Valencia Telleria, a doctor of the National

Division, under the Supervision of Dr. José Luis Zeballos, the National Chief of the same Division. "Hansen's disease" and "Hansen patient" are part of the new terminology employed. "Virchowiano", "Antígeno de Mitsuda", "Reacción de Mitsuda" and "Eritema nudoso hanseniano" are the substitutes for "lepromatous", "lepromin", "lepromin test" and "lepra reaction", respectively. The word "Lepra" appears only once, in the company of "Lazaro", "Laza-

rillo", "Pujgio", "Chaquipujgio", "Mananto", "La si amigos", which Dr. Valencia Telleria classify as "appellations related to the beliefs of high contagiousity and supernatural influences."

This fact places Bolivia within the as yet small group of nations that have decided to expel the word "leprosy" from their technical material and to start enlightenment of the public with scientific methods.

Brazilian "Colonia" changes to "Dermatologic Hospital"

In accordance with the new Brazilian program to combat hanseniasis and leprosy the old "Colonia Antonio Aleixo"

(Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil) was renamed "Hospital Dermatológico de Manaus".

New Professor of Dermatology

Prof. R. D. Azulay is now Professor of Dermatology of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. His thesis "Hanseniasis. Da Imuno-biologia à Imunopatologia" ("Hanseniasis. From Immunology to Immunopa-

thology") covers all aspects of the subject and includes the author's personal investigations. The thesis, approved with the highest mark, is a must for all researchers in immunology and hansenology.

India Gives Hanseniasis Patient a Posthumous National Award

"Shri J. G. Datar was afflicted with leprosy and though highly crippled and later blind, rehabilitated himself through sheer determination and courage, and developed a Poultry Farm, and a soap and disinfectant department at the Dr. Bandorawalla Leprosy Hospital under the support of the Poona District Leprosy Committee. Shri Datar not only rehabilitated himself but through his efforts rehabilitated a large number of ex-leprosy patients in poultry farming and other crafts. To the best of our knowledge this is the first instance of an ex-leprosy patient being honoured in this way in our country. The honour is all the

more as Government of India went out of its way to give him a posthumous Award."

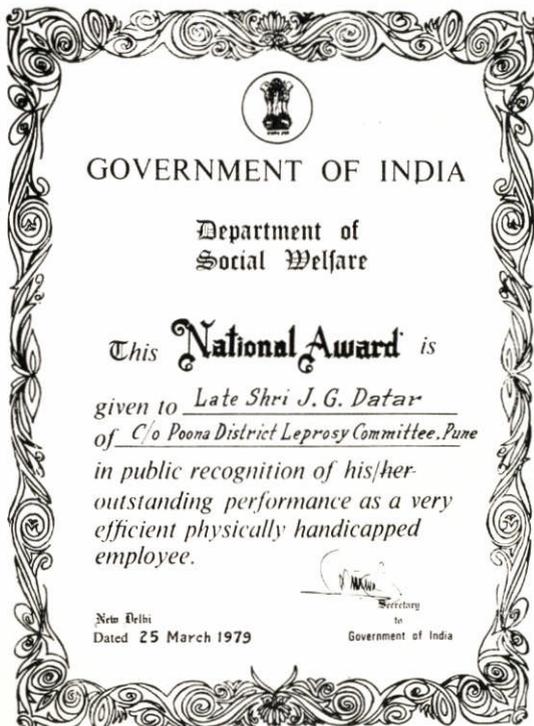
"Mr. Datar had given permission for publishing his photographs on several occasions before, and as a matter of fact his photograph has been published in magazines in the past. His family is also aware of this and does not mind it in the least."

From the letter

Dr. J. M. Mehta

Hon. President, Poona District Leprosy Committee

Maharashtra, India



Hansenologia Internationalis in "Index Medicus"

"Hansenologia Internationalis" has been selected for inclusion in the National Library of Medicine's MEDLARS data base

Accordingly, it has been entered into the Library's computer system and will be indexed for future issues of *Index Medicus*.

"Hanseniasis: Abstracts and News"

As announced in vol. 3, number 2, 1979 of "Hansenologia Internationalis", the periodical "Hanseniasis: Abstracts and News" was discontinued. The most interesting

abstracts of the hansenological literature will be published in a special section of "Hansenologia Internationalis", starting with this number.