

NEWS

New instructions for the control of hanseniasis in Brazil

On November 23, 1976, Dr. Ademyr Rodrigues da Silveira, the Director of the National Division of Sanitary Dermatology, signed the new "Instructions" for the control of hanseniasis in Brazil, in accordance with the Norms issued by Prof. Paulo de Almeida Machado, the Brazilian Minister of Health.

Control will be based on a) Health education; b) BCG; c) Case finding; d) Treatment and e) Prevention and treatment of disabilities.

In order to ensure general enlightenment of the public and education of patients and their contacts, the terminology "Leprosy" is prohibited and replaced by "Hanseniasis" and derivatives. BCG will be extensively applied and intensively reinforced in contacts and in population of highly endemic areas, especially in the 0-2 year age group. Voluntary attendance at integrated health centers will be incentivated by all possible methods. Intercurrent diseases will be treated in general hospitals, whenever possible. Simple techniques to prevent disabilities are to be executed at all local integrated health centers.

Contraceptives will be given to women, having in view the teratogenicity of thalidomide. Antihansenic drugs will be freely handed over to private practitioners willing to cooperate with public health agencies.

Internation in specialized hospitals will be temporary and restricted to 1) intercurrent diseases, when general hospitals are not at hand, 2) treatment of Virchowian and dimorphous patients unable to comply with recommendations and 3) research. These specialized hospitals will have their ancient names dropped ("Leprosarium", "Asylum", "Colony", "Sanitarium", etc.) and replaced by "Hospital of Sanitary Dermatology", "Tropical Pathology", or equivalents. Children eventually born in those hospitals will be transferred to foster homes; general institutions for children are the second choice.

Irrecoverable cases of hanseniasis will be hospitalized together with other cases of permanent disabilities, in Social Welfare institutions. The welfare organs will take care of all economical and professional problems of those patients.

The National Division will intensify studies on the etiopathogenetic, clinico-pathological, epidemiological, therapeutic and sociological aspects of hansenology — and requests all state Public Health Services to do the same. Sociological studies will have in view removing the cultural barriers which are hindering control and the integration of patients and contacts into the community.

Instructions for the control of hanseniasis

A permanent vigilance against stigmatizing and sensationalistic activities will be instituted for immediate correction and neutralization. Courses and training of personnel at all levels will be intensified, covenants with bio-medical and

sociological schools will be fostered, and elements of hansenology will be taught to children and youngsters in all grades.

Periodical Seminars organized by the National Division will assess the development of the programmed activities.