

OUTCOME OF TREATMENT IN LEPROSY REACTIONS

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KAMPIRAPAP, M.D.****ABSTRACT**

This retrospective study was conducted to describe the nature of leprosy reactions and their treatments, to determine the incidence rates of leprosy reactions, to determine responses to treatment for leprosy reactions, and to describe the disability grading pre- and post-treatment for these reactions. The medical records of patients treated in the Leprosy Clinic of Raj-Pracha Samasai Institute, from October 1998 to September 2005, were reviewed. Of 420 patients, 222 (52.9%) treated with multidrug therapy (MDT) had reactions; of the latter, only 158 were eligible for this study.

The incidence rate for leprosy reactions was 52.9%. 83.5% of patients with reactions had multibacillary leprosy (MB). The incidence rates for reversal reactions (RRs) and erythema nodosum leprosum (ENL) were 57.0 and 24.1%, respectively. 61.3% of patients with reactions had neuritis.

Prednisolone was used for all patients with reactions, with a mean prednisolone treatment duration of 8.2 ± 8.6 months. The majority of patients treated with prednisolone improved, but a few cases died or worsened. In those cases, tuberculosis and malignancy were included. Thalidomide was used for three patients refractory to prednisolone treatment, and efficacy was confirmed for every thalidomide case.

The incidence of side-effects (mostly attributable to prednisolone) was only 8.9%, but since significant side-effects did occur, so that close attention is required.

The pre- and post-MDT disability gradings for patients with reaction were the same, but examination of grading changes for these cases showed greater deterioration among patients with reactions than among patients without.

These findings showed that most patients with reactions improved with prednisolone treatment and the side-effects were few. Earlier detection of leprosy, and reactions, are needed because of worsened disability among patients with leprosy reactions.

**KEY WORDS: LEPROSY REACTIONS / PREDNISOLONE / NEURITIS /
DISABILITY GRADING**

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