

Hansen's Disease-A Brief Overview

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DESCRIPTION

Hansen's Disease (HD) which is often known as leprosy and it is a long-term infection caused by the microorganisms *Mycobacterium leprae* or *Mycobacterium lepromatosis*. Infection can harm nerves, the respiratory tract, the skin and the eyes. Muscle weakness and poor vision are the symptoms of infection. Leprosy signs can appear within a year, but it can take up to 20 years for some people to develop. Although significant contact is required, leprosy is spread between people. Leprosy has a low pathogenicity with 95% of persons infected with *M. leprae* who are not developing the disease. Spread is assumed to happen by a cough or touch with fluid from a leprosy-infected person's nose. The ease with which a person contracts the disease is influenced by genetic variables and immunological function.

Symptoms like runny nose, dry scalp, eye problems, skin lesions, muscle weakness, reddish skin, smooth, shiny, diffuse thickening of facial skin, ear and hand, loss of sensation in fingers and toes, thickening of peripheral nerves, a flat nose due to destruction of nasal cartilage and other aspects of speech production. Leprosy can have a range of impacts on people. Incubation lasts on average five years. Symptoms may appear within the first year of infection or 20+ years later. The development of pale or pink-coloured areas of skin that are unresponsive to cold or pain is always the first visible sign of leprosy. Nerve disorders such as numbness or irritation in the hands or feet can occasionally follow the patches of darkened skin. As cartilage is taken into the body, secondary infections can cause tissue loss, causing fingers and toes to become shorter and damaged. The immunological response of a person varies based on the type of leprosy they have.

Physical and neurological damage may be irreversible even if the condition is healed, thus early discovery is critical. Medications can reduce the chance of contracting leprosy in those who live with people who do have the disease as well as those who come into touch with persons who have leprosy outside the house. People who come into intimate touch with someone who have leprosy should be provided preventive treatment, according to the WHO.

In adults and children over the age of two who do not have leprosy or tuberculosis, a single dose of rifampicin is recommended as a prophylactic medication. Within two years, preventive therapy is linked to a 57% reduction in infections and within six years, a 30% reduction in infections. Treatment options for leprosy include a variety of medications. All persons with leprosy should take a 3-drug regimen of rifampicin, dapson and clofazimine for 6 months for bacillary leprosy and 12 months for typically extend leprosy. Multidrug Therapy is still quite successful and after the first monthly dose, they are no longer contagious. Because it's packaged in blister packs, it's safe and simple to use in the field.

In 2015, 14 nations account for 94 percent of new leprosy cases. India had the most new cases (60 percent of all cases reported), followed by Brazil and Indonesia. Although the global number of cases of leprosy is decreasing there are still some areas of the world where the disease is more prevalent such as Brazil, South Asia (India, Nepal, Bhutan), some regions of Africa (Tanzania, Madagascar, Mozambique) and the western Pacific. In the United States, between 150 and 250 cases are detected each year.

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