



INFECTIOUS DISEASES (BACTERIAL, FUNGAL, VIRAL, PARASITIC, INFESTATIONS)

LEPROSY IN CHILDREN: A 20 YEAR RETROSPECTIVE CASE REVIEW IN NEPAL

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Introduction: Although Nepal achieved leprosy elimination as public health problem in 2009, approximately 3,200 new leprosy cases are detected in Nepal annually - among whom, 7.2% are under 15 years of age. These child cases evidence active and persistent transmission even post elimination.

Objectives: To study the profile of clinical presentations, complications and treatment of childhood leprosy registered at Anandaban Hospital, a tertiary leprosy referral center in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Materials and Methods: A retrospective chart study was performed on children < 15 years reporting to Anandaban Hospital from 1994 to 2015 for leprosy-related treatment.

Results: Among 2701 total new leprosy cases registered from 1994-2015, 211 (7.8%) were < 15 years of age (average 11.5, range 3-15 years). 39% reported family history of known leprosy contact(s). The male to female ratio was 3:2, with the majority (60%) receiving child multibacillary (MB) multi-drug therapy (MDT) and 28% were slit skin smear positive. Twenty one percent of the children had World Health Organization (WHO) disability grade 1 and 11% had grade 2 disability at the time of registration. Regarding leprosy reactions, 30% had neuritis, 10% Type 1 reaction (T1R), and 3% had erythema nodosum leprosum (ENL) - of which 76% received prednisolone treatment. About 12% defaulted: all within 3 months of initiating MDT and 65% (17/26) from non-leprosy households. Two patients later relapsed as adults.

Conclusion: Leprosy transmission remains ongoing in Nepalese children. Household contact screening including children is imperative, as 39% report family contact(s). Stronger initiatives are needed to help raise awareness among parents to improve compliance and better outcomes for their children. 2016-2018 data analyses are in progress.

