



TROPICAL DERMATOLOGY

## CLINICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF IMPORTED CASES OF LEPROSY IN MALAYSIA

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**Introduction:** Malaysia saw a rise in foreign workers over the last 2 decades and with them they brought many infectious diseases including leprosy.

**Objective:** This retrospective study examined the clinical characteristics of foreigners with leprosy in Malaysia between 1980 and 2012.

**Materials and Methods:** Demographic and clinical data from all the cases of leprosy seen in 6 Dermatology out-patient clinics in Malaysia between 1980 and 2012 were collected and analysed.

**Result:** There were 240 foreigners diagnosed to have leprosy with 74.2% seen after year 2000. On the contrary, 82.0% of the 856 local patients were seen before year 2000. Indonesians make up the majority of cases (72.9%) followed by Nepalese (6.7%) and Bangladeshi (4.2%). Majority were male (72.9%) and had multibacillary leprosy (78.8%). The mean age was  $30.7 \pm 8.30$ . Pretreatment mean Bacteriologic Index and mean Morphological Index were  $2.2 \pm 1.96$  and  $2.4 \pm 6.60$  respectively. Type 1 leprosy reaction was seen in 17.9% whereas type 2 reaction in 24.6%. Severe adverse drug reaction was seen in 11.3%. Compared to local cases, imported cases tend to be younger (30.7 vs 42.2,  $p < 0.001$ ) and more likely to not complete their treatment (35.8% vs 62.0%,  $p < 0.001$ ).

**Conclusion:** Imported cases of leprosy in Malaysia are mainly multibacillary cases which is more infectious. This and the tendency to not complete their treatment pose a serious public health danger. With rapid development and globalisation, immigration of foreign workers especially in the construction and household sectors will definitely pose this problem worldwide.

