Letters to the Editor

Interpretation of Formation Mechanism of Erythema Nodosum in Leprosy Patients

Meny Bergel

(Director del Instituto de Investigaciones Leprológicas
Rosario-Argentina)

_Erythema nodosum leprosum_ would be due to a fall in the amount of alive Hansen bacilli and not to the presence of dead bacillary bodies or to the action of detritus produced by the dead bacilli.

The alive Hansen bacilli consume fatty peroxides and in that way, take these metabolites out of the leprous' organism. By suppressing this flow of peroxides, such toxic-inflammatory elements—the triggers of the erythema nodosum—are eliminated. Peroxides, usually formed in the leprous, are not used when Hansen bacilli die by a bactericidal chemotherapy. So, they will circulate freely, bringing about the _erythema nodosum._

The above mentioned ideas can be summed up into the following premises:

a) _Erythema nodosum_ of the leprous is produced by the absence of alive Hansen bacilli and not by the presence of dead bacilli and/or their derivatives.

b) Hansen bacillus is useful for the leprous—considering the formation of the _erythema nodosum_—because it helps to neutralize this toxic-inflammatory effect produced by the fatty peroxides.

c) The leprosy reaction in the patient suffering from leprosy—one of its symptoms is the _erythema nodosum_—would be produced by the increase of fatty peroxides in the tissues, by means of the two following mechanisms: first, lack of fatty peroxide consumption due to the death of Hansen bacilli (produced by bactericidal drugs) and in second turn, increase of peroxides, for instance, after iodide administration.