

## News and Notes

### **‘Leprosy control in Thailand: trends in case detection 1965–2005’**

From WHO’s Weekly epidemiological record No. 30, of 27th July 2007.

His Majesty King Chulalongkorn initiated provision of care to leprosy patients in Thailand in 1908 when he granted land to build the first leprosarium in Chiang Mai. Thereafter, additional leprosaria and settlements were built throughout the country. This article provides information and graphs on the trend in case detection for leprosy over various years.

For further information go to <http://www.who.int/wer>

### **Development of museums and archives related to leprosy**

The first workshop ever to be devoted entirely to the ‘Development of Museums and Archives relating to Leprosy’ was held at Mumbai and Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India from 21–24 November 2005. The workshop, organised by Acworth Leprosy Hospital Society for Research, Rehabilitation and Education in Leprosy, and the Hind Kusht Nivaran Sangh (Maharashtra Branch), was run to share with researchers in India and elsewhere, the experience of the Mumbai group in locating, documenting, preserving and utilising archival records. These included oral testimonies, first-hand accounts, photographs, documents relating to social, philanthropic work and medical research on leprosy.

The workshop highlighted the use of archival information in Museums of Leprosy, with special reference to the museum taking shape at the Acworth Leprosy Hospital in Mumbai, which has been planned around eight themes. There was a valuable exchange of information and a very fruitful interaction between participants. During the workshop, delegates visited leprosy institutions and leprosy-related sites, and also discussed the role of museums and archives in the collection and preservation of historical material, and the importance of collaboration between social scientists, leprologists, historians, archivists and museum curators.

The Global Project on the History of Leprosy was discussed, which provides a database containing information on organisations, policy matters about leprosy control, information on scientific and medical archives, records of leprosaria, museums and libraries. It also includes the whereabouts of private collections of those who have worked in the field, and collections of testimonies from those who have been affected by the disease.

The Report of the Workshop is a 116 page A4 booklet with a brief overview of all the sessions that took place, historical milestones and tantalising snippets of the material available for researchers. There is always a danger that once the prevalence of any disease decreases, information that is deemed ‘out-of-date’ can all too easily be discarded as no longer of any use. This workshop has brought back into focus the need to retain and preserve information on leprosy for future generations.

With the prospect of the elimination of leprosy worldwide, it was felt that this was an appropriate time to focus on what they describe as the ‘. . .misconceived disposition of society towards the disease [of leprosy] and the patients.’

This Report is published by Acworth Leprosy Hospital Society for Research, Rehabilitation and Education in Leprosy, Wadala, Mumbai 400 031, India, with a grant from the Nippon Foundation of Japan. The Acworth Leprosy Museum has its own very interesting website: [www.theacworthleprosy-museum.org](http://www.theacworthleprosy-museum.org)

For further details of this workshop contact The Acworth Leprosy Hospital Society at [acworthleprosyre@yahoo.co.in](mailto:acworthleprosyre@yahoo.co.in)