CASE REPORT

THE LION IS ON THE PROWL

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ABSTRACT: An 80 years old male, farmer by occupation from the suburban village in Chennai presented with multiple nodular lesions over the face and the external ear, which led to change in the contour of the face. According to the patient the nodules started appearing 20 years back and have progressively increased in size and number till date. He also complained of nasal stuffiness and collapse of nasal bridge. No history of contact with a case of Hansen's disease. He had taken treatment for minor medical ailments like upper respiratory tract infection and urinary tract infection from various registered medical practitioners in his locality. No history of any other major medical or surgical illness in the past. During the clinical examination patient was found to be having multiple nodules on the face throwing it into folds giving a lion like appearance (Leonine facies), loss of lateral 1/3rd of eyebrows and eyelashes (Madrosis), multiple nodules over both external ears, lengthening of both ear lobes giving the appearance of Buddha's ears, collapse of nasal bridge (Saddle nose). In the trunk there were few ill defined, erythematous, near symmetrical, hypaesthetic macules to touch, pain and temperature. Peripheral nerves like both supraorbital and both ulnar nerves were thickened but non-tender. Muscle power was normal, there was no lagophthalmus.

KEYWORDS: Hansen's, Leonine facies, Hypaesthetic macules.

INTRODUCTION: We all are aware that the leprosy elimination by all countries in 2005 was the target initiated by WHO in November 1999.¹ According to official reports received during 2008 from 118 countries and territories, the global registered prevalence of leprosy at the beginning of 2008 stood at 212,802 cases, while the number of new cases detected during 2007 was 254,525 (Excluding the small number of cases in Europe). The number of new cases detected globally has fallen by 11,100 cases (a 4% decrease) during 2007 compared with 2006.² The health authorities of the Government of India, on 30th January of this year, have declared that India has reached the elimination target by the end of year 2005,³ the elimination target of Leprosy being <1/10,000 population.⁴ The prevalence rate in India, which traditionally accounted for the highest burden of leprosy, globally and regionally, has declined from 6.0 per 10,000 in 1996 to 0.84 per 10,000 population in March 2006. The new case detection has declined from a peak of 89/100,000 in 1999 to 14.27/100,000 in March 2006.⁵

In this scenario, I have a doubt whether we really reached our target of elimination or the disease is still dodging us. This came to my mind, when I recently came across a case of Hansen's with explicit features, in Aug 2008 at the suburban of Chennai, Tamilnadu, India. Whether this is an isolated incidence or a portion of wild fire showing only the tip of the iceberg?

DISCUSSION: As this case fulfilled all the cardinal features of Leprosy it was diagnosed as a case of Hansen's disease and confirmed by Micro-biological and Histo-pathological examinations, and treated with multi drug therapy.

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All those who read this case report will surely feel a typical book presentation of Hansen's disease. This case is presented in this journal for two reasons; one is to exhibit that in spite of clear cut facial features of Leprosy medical aid had not reached this person for duration of 20 years, in the era of so called "final push of Leprosy". The second reason is that inspite of explicit facial feature of Leprosy, the disease was not recognized by the registered medical practitioners who treated the patient for his other minor ailments. These two reasons show that the Kathmandu recommendations which instruct to stop all active search for case detection should be waived off.

Hence, active case detection has to be started which will enable us to identify all cases of Leprosy and hasten their cure. An intensive and educative training is required not only for paramedics but also for all registered medical practitioners so that they can easily identify and treat such cases and put the prowling lions (leonine facies) at rest.

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Saddle Nose

Leonine Facies

CASE REPORT

Buddha ERA

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