

Stigma: A dizain for Hansen

Stigma

My lids lag, but still, through people I see
I feel no touch, but human kindness does touch me
I feel no heat, but I, too, yearn a warm embrace
I feel no cold but icy stares I often face
I feel no pain; the hurt inside still makes me numb
My muscles are weak, but heavy burdens I carry some
Patches on my skin gone, scars remain, some seen, some hidden
Healed ulcers, but some open wounds deeper, festering, not forgotten
My high-stepping gait, I still walk proud, now and forever
I am cured of my disease, but can stigma be treated ... ever?

World leprosy day is observed internationally on the last Sunday of January, while in India, it is observed on the 30th of January, the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The theme for this year's world leprosy day is "Act now. End leprosy." The key message stressed is that complete elimination of leprosy is possible and must be prioritized. We need to act now to achieve this and also need to 'reach the unreached'—make people aware that leprosy is completely treatable.¹

Unfortunately, it is not enough to treat leprosy; we also need to eradicate the stigma associated with the disease, which might continue even after a patient is effectively cured.

Declaration of patient consent

Patient's consent not required as there are no patients in this study.

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Nil.

Conflict of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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Reference

1. World Leprosy Day 2023. Available from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2023/01/29/default-calendar/act-now-end-leprosy-wld-2023>. [cited 2023 Jan 12].

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