

LEPROSY



Leprosy is a nonfatal, chronic infectious disease caused by *Mycobacterium leprae*, whose clinical manifestations are largely confined to the skin, peripheral nervous system, upper respiratory tract, eyes, and testes.

The propensity of the disease, when untreated, result in certain characteristic deformities and the recognition in most cultures that the disease is communicable from person to person have resulted historically in a profound social stigma.

The first leprosarium in Ghana was established at Dome, Ho by Dr Cook in 1925. Thereafter, the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association (BELRA) made a considerable contribution in the establishment of leprosy services in the country.

Also, the first modern leprosarium was opened at Ankafu in 1949 by Dr McKilvie. The Medical Field Units took leprosy services to rural areas in Ghana in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s.

There are two extreme types of leprosy. They are Lepromatous leprosy, which is associated with free multiplication of the causative organism, and tuberculoid (or neural) leprosy in which the multiplication of the organism is restricted by an active defensive tissue.

Treatment: Crude oils and ethylesters which contain fatty acids are being given orally, by intravenous. It is also infiltrated into lepromatous area of skin. The residue of the dose is then injected.