

# LONGITUDINAL OCULAR SURVEY OF 202 FILIPINO PATIENTS WITH MULTI-BACILLARY (MB) LEPROSY TREATED WITH 2 YEAR WHO-MULTIPLE DRUG THERAPY

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**Abstract.** The aim of this study was to describe the ocular conditions in multi-bacillary (MB) leprosy patients treated with 2 year WHO multiple drug therapy (MDT), consisting of dapsone, clofazimine and rifampin, a regimen expected to reduce ocular complications of leprosy. We conducted comprehensive eye examinations in 202 Filipino MB leprosy patients before, during, and after WHO 2 year MDT. Assessments were carried out for at least 5 years. Inflammatory "lepra" reactions occurred in 62% (reversal reaction, 52%; erythema nodosum leprosum, 10%); most were mild. Eye abnormalities consisted mostly of diminished corneal sensitivity before MDT (6%) and lagophthalmos ( $n = 7$ , 3.4%). Six of 7 lagophthalmos cases occurred in a subset of 132 patients with facial patches (5%). Visual acuity scores, intra-ocular pressures and pupil cycle times were unremarkable. Bacillary invasion, keratitis, episcleritis, iridocyclitis, ectropion, synechiae, glaucoma and cataract formation were not detected. Scleral clofazimine pigmentation was frequent, resolving in most within 3 years of treatment cessation. Facial patches at presentation may denote a higher risk for lagophthalmos. We propose the generally low rates of ocular problems reflected mild lepra reactions, due to anti-inflammatory properties of clofazimine, a relatively young cohort, and a readily accessible community-based clinic permitting earlier diagnosis and prompt treatment.

**Keywords:** leprosy, lepra reactions, ocular disease, WHO multi-drug therapy (MDT)

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