Leprosy:
Why is elimination so elusive?

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Local control rather than elimination:

♦ local problem;
♦ not a priority for imperial government or local colonial state, or colonial medicine;
♦ no threat to trade or to social order;
♦ ✩ missionaries.
Missionary medicine:

conversion and care;

Harold Copping, A medical missionary attending to a sick African. Oil painting 1930
Missionary medicine:

♦ conversion and care;
♦ leper asylums or colonies;
Missionary medicine

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♦ leper asylums or colonies;
♦ Biblical – symbolic of service, self-sacrifice.
Leprosy in the Colonial Era

Missionary medicine:

♦ Biblical – symbolic of service, self-sacrifice.
Enigmatic disease

♦ endemic – sporadic: complex epidemiology
NOTE
Countries where the disease is severe are indicated by the deep shade of red; where it is less intense by
the lighter shade.
In some of the latter countries the lines are very
fine. All small islands are marked by the deep
shades of red whether the cases are numerous or not,
in order that the colour may be readily seen.

MAP
SHOWING APPROXIMATELY
THE PRESENT
DISTRIBUTION OF LEPROSY
IN THE WORLD
Leper distribution map of India.
Census 1881
Leprosy in India: report of the Leprosy Commission in India, 1890-91,
Published: Calcutta 1892
Printed: Printed by the superintendent of government printing, India, Calcutta, 1892
Leper distribution map of India. Census 1891

Leprosy in India: report of the Leprosy Commission in India, 1890-91,

Published: Calcutta 1892

Printed: Printed by the superintendent of government printing, India, Calcutta, 1892.
Leper distribution map of India to show the increase and decrease of leprosy since 1881.

Leprosy in India: report of the Leprosy Commission in India, 1890-91, Published: Calcutta 1892 Printed: Printed by the superintendent of government printing, India, Calcutta, 1892.
Enigmatic disease

♦ endemic - sporadic;
♦ contagion versus anticontagion;
Enigmatic disease

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♦ contagion versus anticontagion;
♦ contingent contagion – heredity, salt, fish;

Leprosy in the Colonial Era

Illustration of cells infected with Leprosy bacilli. *Leprosy in its clinical & pathological aspects*, G. Armauer Hansen, Published: John Wright, Bristol, 1895.
Enigmatic disease

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- contingent contagion – heredity, salt, fish;
- therapy: chaulmoogra oil
Enigmatic disease

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Leprosy in the Colonial Era

Leprosy:
Why was elimination so elusive?

- Local Control > Elimination
- Missionary > State Medicine
- Enigmatic disease