

## **Cutaneous Leishmaniasis acquired in Sri Lanka :is it emerging?**

Cutaneous leishmaniasis is a vector borne parasitic disease with a worldwide prevalence, caused by species of the protozoan *Leishmania* and transmitted by species of the sandfly. In Sri Lanka, sandflies are widely prevalent. However, except for 2 imported human cases reported in 1990 no locally acquired human cases have been reported until recently. The first 2 human cases of locally acquired cutaneous leishmaniasis were reported from Ambalantota and Mahiyangana in 1992 and 1995 respectively. Here we report the third, fourth and fifth human cases of locally acquired cutaneous leishmaniasis in Sri Lanka.

The 3 patients from Pannala, Rajangana and Potuvil, presented with chronic, non-healing cutaneous lesions, dry and crusty in the centre with small satellite nodules at the periphery. One person had been to Maldives which is reportedly free of the disease and the other two had never been abroad.

In all 3 cases, microscopic examination of processed impression smears made from the lesions revealed *Leishmania amastigotes*. Leishmanin (Montenegro) skin test was performed on two patients and both of them gave positive results. Formol Gel test and attempts to culture the organisms in vitro gave negative results on 2 patients and could not be done on the third.

Islandwide local transmission is evident from these and the previous reports. As these patients were living near jungles, wild zoonotic sources should be considered. With wide prevalence of the vector, the potential zoonotic reservoir, increased international travel and more local cases being reported, this may turn out to be an emerging disease in Sri Lanka.