# CLINICAL PROFILES AND PATTERNS OF CHILDREN WITH LEPROSY FROM A TERTIARY HOSPITAL IN THE PHILIPPINES: A 10-YEAR RETROSPECTIVE STUDY

LB-RES-004

APCCMI2025 BANGKOK

**MICHAELA GABRIELLE G. GUIEB, MD**
MA. LUISA ABAD-VENIDA, MD, FPDS; MATILDE KRISHA P. MONTENEGRO, MD, FPDS
JOSE R. REYES MEMORIAL MEDICAL CENTER, PHILIPPINES

## BACKGROUND

**Leprosy** is a chronic bacterial infection with affinity for the **skin and peripheral nerves.** Despite global efforts, leprosy remains prevalent in some countries. **Children** represent one of the most vulnerable groups due to their immature immune systems and close contact with infected family members.

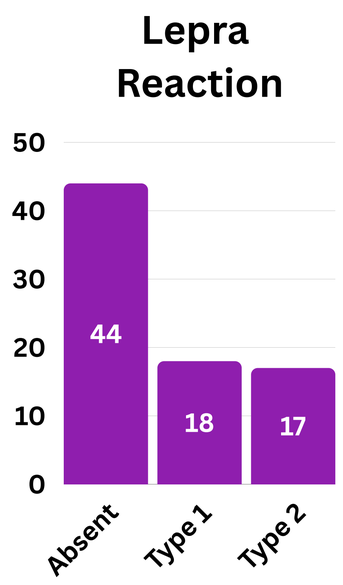
**Figure 1.** Multiple indurated papules and plaques seen in childhood lepromatous leprosy

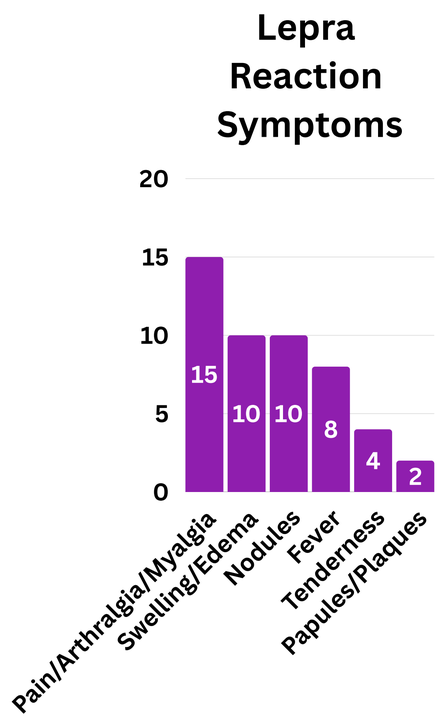
## METHODOLOGY

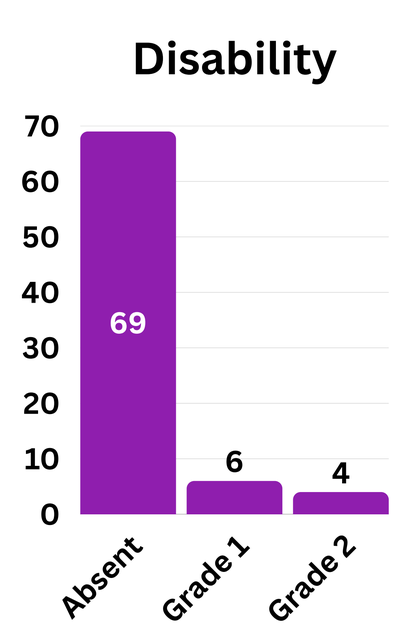
The study determined the **incidence and clinico-demographic profile of children with leprosy** confirmed by slit-skin smear and/or histopathological studies from **2014 to 2023** at the Department of Dermatology, Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center. This research was a descriptive cross-sectional study. Demographic information, clinical presentation, laboratory findings, diagnosis and treatment, and follow-up outcomes were collected.

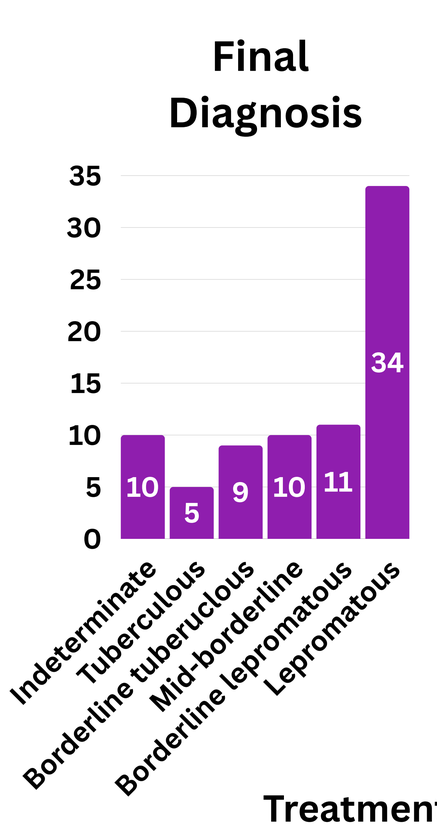
## RESULTS

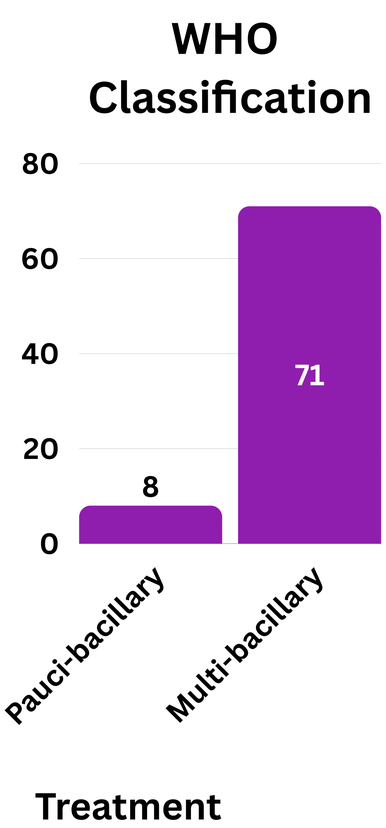
**Seventy-nine pediatric patients** were included. Majority of the cases were from **2014-2019**, predominantly **adolescent aged 11–18 years** (75.9%), mostly **males** (60.8%), presented with **multibacillary disease** (79.7%), had **more than five skin lesions** (73.4%), and **ulnar nerve affectation** (6.32%). Median duration of disease until consultation was **1 yea**r. Final diagnosis was mostly **lepromatous leprosy** (38%). Slit-skin smears were positive (75.9%), with a mean bacteriological index (BI) of **3.13**. Lepra reactions occurred (34.2%). Despite high bacillary loads, only some had documented disabilities (20.3%). **Treatment was completed in more than half of patients** (59.5%), while some required **treatment extension** (13.9%) and had **relapse** (1.3%).

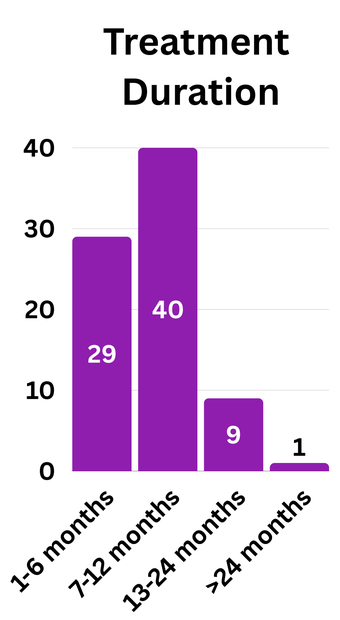


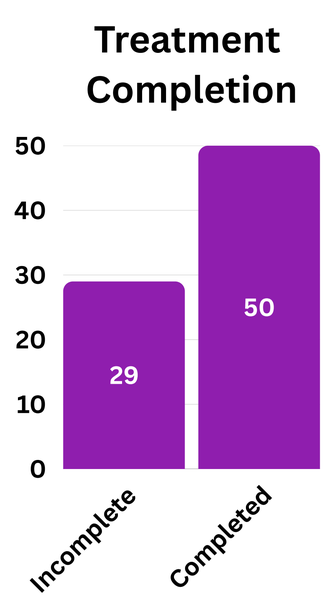




## CONCLUSION

Leprosy among children remains a **significant public health concern.** The predominance of multibacillary forms, high BI, and delayed diagnosis in children suggest **ongoing community transmission**. The results highlight the significance of early detection, improved contact tracing, bacteriological monitoring, and adherence support to lessen disability and stop transmission in endemic areas.

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THIS REPORT HAS NO COMMERCIAL FUNDING AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST.