

Main issues

- the Biblical myth
- Importance of name change - Leprosy to Hansen's Disease
- What 'Hansen' means to the affected person.
- Brazilian Law 9,010 and its importance for Hansen's disease in the country
- Challenges in combating prejudice and discrimination against Hansen's disease.

Hansen's disease in the Bible

- In Brazil, where a significant number of Bible believers exist, their beliefs greatly influence our perception. This also applies to Hansen's disease, previously known as "leprosy."
- The term 'leprosy' carries a heavy burden of prejudice, discrimination, and stigma spanning thousands of years. It first appeared in the Septuagint around 200 years before Christ. The Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, carried out by 72 wise Jewish elders familiar with Jewish customs and practices.
- When faced with the untranslatable term 'Tsaraath,' these wise men aimed for closer linguistic proximity in their translation. They chose LEPRA, meaning rottenness, divine punishment, impurity, desquamation, and addiction.
- LEPRA was believed to be God's punishment for disobedient individuals. Those who opposed the laws and religious customs of the time were marked by God through stains, deformities, mold in houses, walls, and clothes as a form of punishment. Consequently, they were ostracized from society and marginalized. LEPRA was seen as the disease of divine disobedience.
- This historical perception deeply rooted in Brazilian society has subjected people affected by Hansen's disease to an extremely harsh situation.



The Discovery of the Bacillus

- In 1873, Gerard Amauer Hansen discovered the bacillus responsible for Hansen's disease, which was named *Mycobacterium leprae* in Latin. While this discovery was significant in the medical and research fields, it did not alleviate the societal perception of those affected.
- The name LEPROA became associated with discrimination, leading to the enactment of discriminatory laws worldwide and the marginalization of affected individuals.
- Since then, efforts have been made to change the name. Historians, scientists, and those affected believed that transforming society's perception of Hansen's disease required more than just treatment and cure. It necessitated distancing the disease from its biblical associations and the misconceptions passed down through generations.
- A name change was required to alter the perception of the disease in Brazil.




The Name



- Gerard Hansen's influence led to a behavioral shift regarding an incurable disease and its associated myths. Naming the disease after him was crucial in empowering those fighting against prejudice, discrimination, and stigma. It challenged outdated concepts and practices related to the illness.
- The significance of the disease's name extends beyond its discoverer. Today, "Hansen" represents more than just the individual, the myth, the scientist, or the pathology. It has become synonymous with resilience and dignity.
- MORHAN spearheaded a significant mobilization in the country, engaging civil society and sensitizing politicians. This effort resulted in the creation of Law 9010, marking a pivotal moment in addressing long-standing human rights violations in Brazil.

The Law

 **Diário Oficial** REPÚBLICA
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ANO CXXXIII QUINTA-FEIRA, 30 DE MARÇO DE 1995 PREÇO: R\$ 0,33
LEI Nº 9.010, DE 29 DE MARÇO DE 1995

Dispõe e Terminologia relativa a hanseníase e de outras providências.

O PRESIDENTE DA REPÚBLICA
Faço saber que o Congresso Nacional decreta e eu sanciono a seguinte Lei.

Art. 1º O termo "Lepra" e seus derivados não poderão ser utilizados na linguagem empregada aos Documentos Oficiais da Administração centralizada e descentralizada da União e dos Estados membros.

Art. 2º Na divulgação da doença e de seus derivados, far-se-á uso da Terminologia Oficial constante da relação abaixo:

TERMINOLOGIA OFICIAL	TERMINOLOGIA SUBSTITUÍDA
Hanseníase	Lepra
Doente de Hanseníase	Leproso, Doente de Lepra
Hansenologia	Leprologia
Hansenologista	Leprologista
Hansênico	Leprótico
Hansenóide	Lepróide
Hansemide	Lepride
Hansenoma	Leproma
Hanseníase Virchoviana	Lepra Lepromatosa
Hanseníase Tuberculóide	Lepra Tuberculóide
Hanseníase Dimorfa	Lepra Dimorfa
Hanseníase Indeterminada	Lepra Indeterminada
Antígeno de Mitsuda	Lepromina
Hospital de Dermatologia Sanitária de Patologia Tropical ou similares	Leprosário, Leprocômio

Art. 3º Não terão curso nas repartições dos Governos, da União e dos Estados, quaisquer que não observem a Terminologia Oficial ora estabelecida, os quais serão imediatamente arquivados, notificando-se a parte.

Art. 4º Esta Lei entre em vigor na data de sua publicação.


Art. 5º Revogam-se as disposições em contrário.

Brasília, 29 de março de 1995. 174º da Independência e 107º da República.

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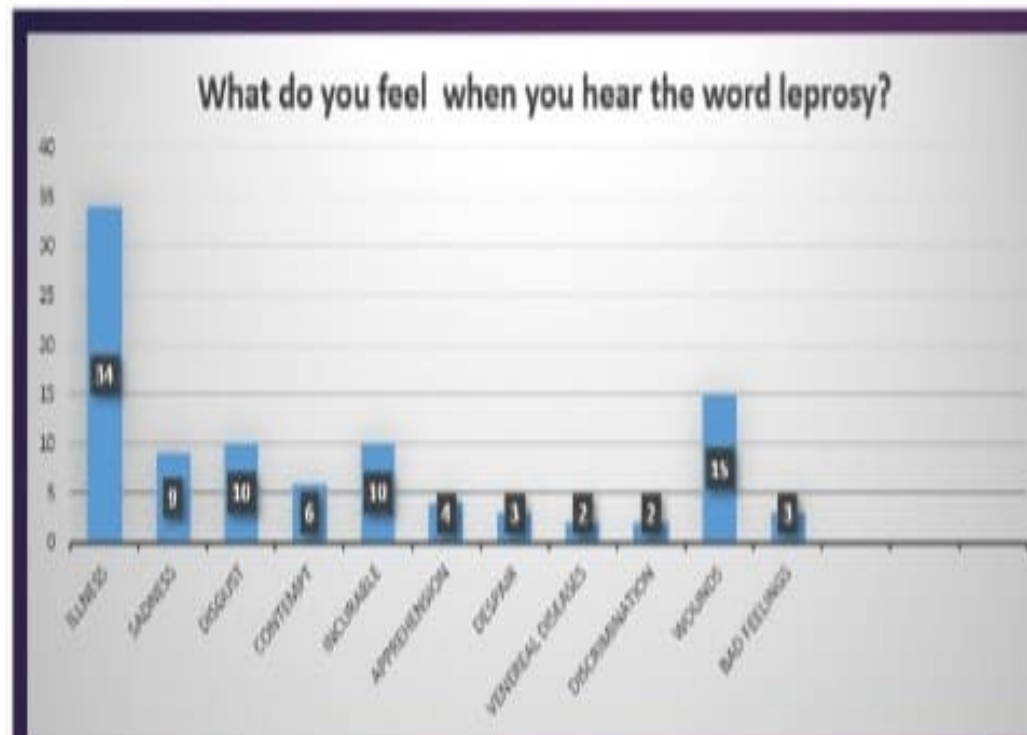


- Brazil took the lead in changing the name of the disease.
- Law 9,010 was a significant milestone in the country's fight against the disease, as it prohibited the use of the term 'leprosy' and was enacted in 1995.
- The law was initiated by medical scientist Abrão Rotenberg and supported by the social movement MORHAN, along with the federal government, setting a precedent for punitive legislation nationwide.

Many health professionals are still unaware of Hansen's disease in the world

- Ensuring accurate information is essential in combating prejudice, discrimination, and stigma.
- It is crucial that misinformation or lack of information does not negatively impact people's lives.
- In Brazil, individuals affected by Hansen's disease must remain vigilant to prevent a recurrence of societal marginalization.

Survey carried out in the city of Campos Sales, Ceará. We managed to change the feelings and understanding on the disease.



141 Health professionals,
Nursing technicians, Aux. of
Nursing, Community Health
Agents and Endemic
Diseases.

When asked what thoughts, feelings when hearing the term LEPROSA, have not hesitated to express in a word the horror they feel for the word, we noticed fear, disinformation and very strong cultural and religious appeal.

15 years' work



- Rising awareness: We have improved communication through broadcasting networks. (TV, Radio, Newspapers, Instagram and other media).
- We turned Law 9010 into a punitive law.
- We have communicated with health professionals about prejudice, discrimination and stigma.
- Less prejudice and discrimination in Brazil.
- Encouragement of sharing accurate information regarding Hansen's disease in all levels of society.
- Sharing stories of communities consist of people affected by Hansen's disease to abolish prejudice and discrimination.

Looking at the future



- MORHAN - The movement for Reintegration of persons affected by Hansen's disease has had multiple meetings with the new federal government departments.
- We are organizing multiple events this year to emphasize the significance of placing individuals affected by Hansen's disease at the forefront of discussions. The name 'Hansen' and the Law will serve as our primary allies in combating prejudice and discrimination, which remain crucial issues in Brazil despite progress.