

# Leprosy (Hansen's Disease) (*Mycobacterium leprae*)

## 1997 CDC Case Definition

### Clinical description

A chronic bacterial disease characterized by the involvement primarily of skin as well as peripheral nerves and the mucosa of the upper airway. Clinical forms of Hansen's disease represent a spectrum reflecting the cellular immune response to *Mycobacterium leprae*. The following characteristics are typical of the major forms of the disease:

- *Tuberculoid*: one or a few well-demarcated, hypopigmented, and anesthetic skin lesions, frequently with active, spreading edges and a clearing center; peripheral nerve swelling or thickening also may occur
- *Lepromatous*: a number of erythematous papules and nodules or an infiltration of the face, hands, and feet with lesions in a bilateral and symmetrical distribution that progress to thickening of the skin
- *Borderline (dimorphous)*: skin lesions characteristic of both the tuberculoid and lepromatous forms
- *Indeterminate*: early lesions, usually hypopigmented macules, without developed tuberculoid or lepromatous features

### Laboratory criteria for diagnosis

- Demonstration of acid-fast bacilli in skin or dermal nerve, obtained from the full-thickness skin biopsy of a lepromatous lesion

### Case classification

**Confirmed:** a clinically compatible case that is laboratory confirmed