

US Aid Medicine, Hansen's Disease Control Policy, and Patients' Rights in Taiwan (1945-1960s)

Yen-chiou Fan

ABSTRACT

From the perspective of USAid medicine in Taiwan after the Second World War and using the archives of Lo Sheng Leprosarium, this article on medical history of Taiwan explored the policy changes for control of Hansen's disease and the reasons behind such changes. The study aimed to make up for the gaps in the history of that era and examined the human rights issues involved in the policy changes. It should be pointed out that the post-war policy changes for Hansen's disease control were neither a natural development nor a logical transformation.

During the colonial era, the Japanese had adopted a policy of forced segregation for people suffering from Hansen's disease. Such policy was still implemented during the transfer of sovereignty and persisted till the mid 1950s. Thereafter, both the introduction of health programs under USAid medicine and the involvement of international church organizations led to policy changes. Treatment of Hansen's disease patients in the early 1960s evidenced the rise of USAid medicine in Taiwan in terms of training of medical professionals, advances in medical technology, as well as establishment of the out-patient system. On the other hand, the Taiwan Leprosy Relief Association set up by international church organizations put into practice their vocation of "medical missionary" by providing outpatient treatment in line with USAid health programs. The research also highlighted the harm done to the inpatients of Lo Sheng Leprosarium in the "medical experiment" when USAid medicine terminated. The relationship between power and medical knowledge under US-aid medicine not only subjected the Hansen's disease sufferers to such health risks and left an infamous patients' rights record in the post-war history of Taiwan

Keywords: Post-WWII Taiwan, USAid medicine, Hansen's Disease Control Policy, Patients' Rights, Taiwan Leprosy Relief Association (TLRA)