



**International Conference:  
Evidence in Global Disability and Health**

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## ABSTRACT

**Title:** How to reduce leprosy-related stigma?

**Abstract text (limited to 300 words, should include background, methods, results and conclusions):**

### **Background:**

Several types of interventions to reduce leprosy-related stigma have been developed and tried, but the effect is rarely measured systematically. In this paper, I will focus on one of the most promising interventions. This intervention is named 'contact' and aims to create a dialogue between people affected by a stigmatized condition (in this case leprosy) and community members. Recently, the effectiveness of this intervention was tested in Cirebon District, Indonesia. A recent paper shows the intervention to be effective in increasing knowledge and in improving public attitudes. However, many other interesting findings were not described in-depth. In this paper, I will address the experiences of the persons giving testimonies, and the emotions of the audience and discuss aspects of sustainability.

### **Methods:**

This study is part of the Stigma Assessment and Reduction of Impact (SARI) project. The SARI project organised 91 so-called 'contact events' in 62 villages attended by more than 4000 people. Testimonies, participatory videos and comics given or made by people affected by leprosy were used as methods to facilitate a dialogue. A mix of seven quantitative and qualitative methods were used to establish a baseline, monitor the implementation and assess the impact of the contact events. For this paper we mainly used the interviews and reports with observations. The study sample were community members selected using different sampling methods.

### **Results:**

Persons giving testimonies were very happy with their role, they found it rewarding but also struggled in the beginning. Overall the audience was very enthusiastic but a few challenges emerged related to increased fear and perceived misinformation. In both situations the role of the local research assistants was key.

### **Conclusion:**

The results illustrate some of the expected and unexpected challenges that emerged during the implementation of the contact intervention and the key role local and knowledgeable people play in addressing these.

**Deadline for abstract submission: November 30, 2015**

Please submit your abstract to: [disabilitycentre@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:disabilitycentre@lshtm.ac.uk)

**Restricted to one first author abstract per participant.**

If you have any questions, please write to:

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