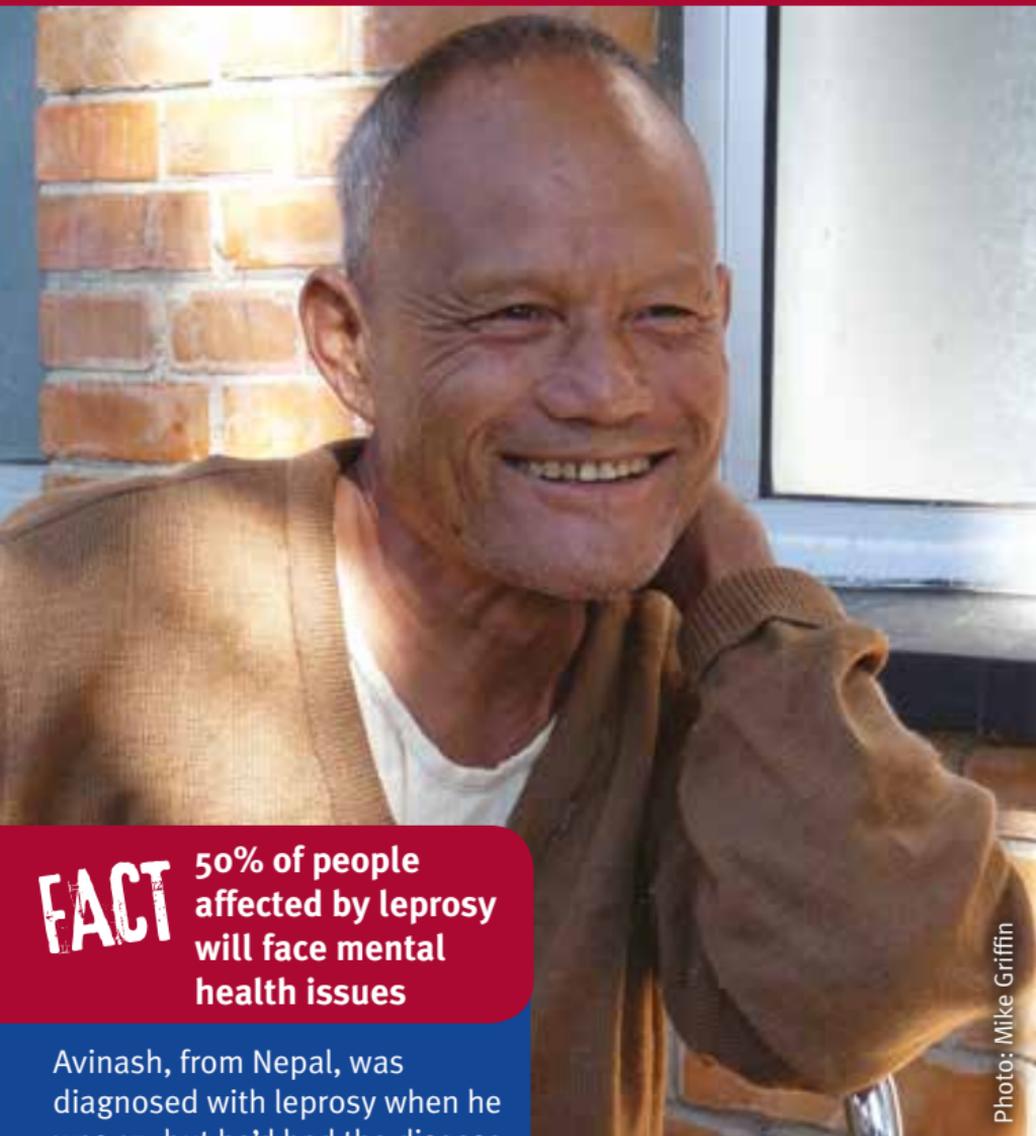




PRAYER FOCUS:

Leprosy & Mental Health

**FACT**

50% of people affected by leprosy will face mental health issues

Avinash, from Nepal, was diagnosed with leprosy when he was 17, but he'd had the disease for many years and infections and ulcers had begun to develop on his leg. Not only did he end up needing to have his leg amputated, he also had to deal with friends asking if he was suffering because the gods were angry with him. Avinash said that he became an angry man and that he drank and smoked. But when he was referred to TLM's Anandaban Hospital, his life began to change. He was introduced to Ruth, one of the counsellors, and she helped him to speak about and understand his feelings. **"I am a very, very blessed man,"** he says now. **"I am at peace in my heart and I thank God for my life."**

In this first issue of **PRAYERFUEL** for 2019, we want to ask you to pray for people like Avinash who are struggling with anxiety, depression and other mental health issues as a result of being diagnosed with leprosy.

Give thanks to God for:

- Counsellors who work with people affected by leprosy to help them cope with difficult family circumstances, feelings of loneliness or isolation, and mental health issues.
- The growing awareness in TLM of how a diagnosis of leprosy can impact a person's mental wellbeing, and how to recognise the signs of depression and anxiety.
- TLM staff around the world who work to reduce the stigma of leprosy by educating communities and helping to debunk myths and superstitions about leprosy. This helps more people come forward for treatment and means they are less likely to be rejected by their family or community.

Please pray for:

- Our new *Talking it Over* resource (see page 11 of *INTouch*), that it will be used widely in church youth groups and will enable young people to understand how they can make a difference to the lives of people who are suffering with mental health issues because of leprosy.
- Families to be reconciled. In some countries, family breakdown occurs when one member is diagnosed with leprosy, usually due to fear of the disease being very contagious. Pray that TLM staff will be equipped to mediate in these situations and that, as a result, families will be reunited.
- More counsellors to be employed in TLM hospitals and other projects. In order for this to happen, there needs to be increased funding available to pay for counselling staff. Pray for a good response to TLMNI's campaigns throughout 2019.
- All staff, volunteers and supporters to continue to be faithful to the central message of TLM's new Global Strategy (see page 4 in *INTouch*) that Jesus is at the centre of all we do. Pray that we will continue to see Jesus glorified and that his love and compassion for people affected by leprosy will be evident.



The Leprosy Mission Northern Ireland
Lagan House, 2a Queens Road, Lisburn BT27 4TZ
Tel: 028 9262 9500 Email: info@tlm-ni.org www.tlm-ni.org

 [Facebook.com/tlmni](https://www.facebook.com/tlmni)

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