

Vulimiri Ramalingaswami (1921-2001)

Professor Vulimiri Ramalingaswami, international editor of *Emerging Infectious Diseases* since 1998, was born on August 8, 1921, at Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh, India. He passed away on May 28, 2001, after a brief illness at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences Hospital, New Delhi, India.

Professor Ramalingaswami obtained his MBBS degree in 1944 from Andhra University, his MD degree in internal medicine in 1946 from the same university, and D.Phil. and D.Sc. degrees in 1951 and 1967, respectively, from Oxford University, United Kingdom.

Professor Ramalingaswami's research career started at Nutrition Research Laboratories, Coonoor in the Nilgiris (now the National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad) in 1947. Since then, he had been very active in various aspects of medical research. He believed in pursuing basic knowledge for a better understanding of causes and mechanisms of human diseases prevalent in developing countries and in the application of that knowledge for human betterment. He believed in promoting a meaningful synthesis of laboratory, clinical, and community-based research. His areas of research were protein energy malnutrition, iodine deficiency disorders, nutritional anemia, and liver diseases in the tropics. He was interested in primary health care, infectious diseases, and health research for development.

The most recent and ongoing activities of Professor Ramalingaswami were in the area of new and reemerging infectious diseases, particularly in the developing world. In 1994, India was struck suddenly by an outbreak of plague—bubonic and pneumonic. A technical advisory committee on plague, established by the Indian government under the chairmanship of Professor Ramalingaswami, reported on the factors responsible for the outbreak and recommended steps for prevention of such outbreaks in the future. The committee's report, "The Plague Epidemic of 1994," was submitted to the government in 1995 and was published in 1996 in a special section of *Current Science* (71:781-806).

Professor Ramalingaswami was a fellow of the Royal Society; a foreign associate of the National Academy of Sciences, USA; foreign member, Academy of Medical Sciences, USSR; and past president of the Indian National Science Academy. He received Doctor of Medicine degrees from several universities, including the Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden.

While presenting Dr. Ramalingaswami the Leon Bernard Foundation Award in 1976, Sir Harold Walter, president of the World Assembly, described him as "Physician, research scientist, teacher, and humanist," a very apt description of Professor Ramalingaswami.

The Cover

The Mosquito Net (circa 1912) John Singer Sargent (1856-1925)

The White House. Gift of Whitney Warren, in memory of President John F. Kennedy, 1964

Neither signed nor dated, *The Mosquito Net* was retained by Sargent until the end of his life and has long been ranked among his best "private" works—small paintings done for his own delectation rather than for a patron. The woman who posed for the painting was Marion Alice (Polly) Barnard, whose father, Frederick, was a painter and friend of Sargent's. Sargent scholar David McKibbin, who knew the Barnard sisters, specified that it was painted in 1912 at Abries, in the French Alps, a few kilometers from the Italian border.

In 1905, after the death of his mother, Sargent began to take annual trips in the autumn, to Italy and Switzerland, usually in the company of his sister Emily and her friends, including the Barnard sisters. On these trips, the women often posed for Sargent's water colors and oil paintings, and in preparation he brought with him elaborate costumes and accessories. One such accessory was the remarkable mosquito net, designed by Emily and called by Sargent "garde-mangers," or "protection from the eaters."

In this amusing picture, the model is resting on a bed under such a garde-manger. Enveloped in voluminous satin skirts, cushioned by white pillows, the woman has abandoned her reading. The book lies neglected in her hand. Her pensive features are glimpsed through the black enclosure of the mosquito net, whose wire ribs describe a series of strong arcs.

The curtain or wall covering behind her, with its suggestion of a floral pattern, is brushed in quick, unfocused touches in sandalwood and brown, blue, green, and red. It owes much to Édouard Manet's portrait of Stéphane Mallarmé (1876; Musée d'Orsay, Paris), a work that had demonstrable impact on Sargent. The contrast between the flashing brushwork in the satin skirt and the motionless brushwork in the silent face is one measure of his imagination and skill. Reclining attitudes are common in Sargent's art, both in portraits and in small genre pictures, and they are evocative of pervasive fin de siècle indolence.

Courtesy of the White House Historical Association, Washington, D.C., USA