

Fig. 1: agarose gel analysis of 91 bp DNA product (black arrows) for the *rpoT* region of *Mycobacterium leprae* by variable number tandem repeat (combination 1) polymerase chain reaction in nasal samples from healthy controls (Co). Upper panel Lanes 1, 2, 4-14, 16: amplified DNA Co samples; 3, 15, 17: nonamplified Co; lower panel 3-7, 10-17: amplified DNA Co samples; 1, 2, 8, 9: nonamplified Co samples; M: 100 bp DNA ladder; NC: negative control (distilled water); PC: positive control (20 pg of chromosomal *M. leprae* DNA).

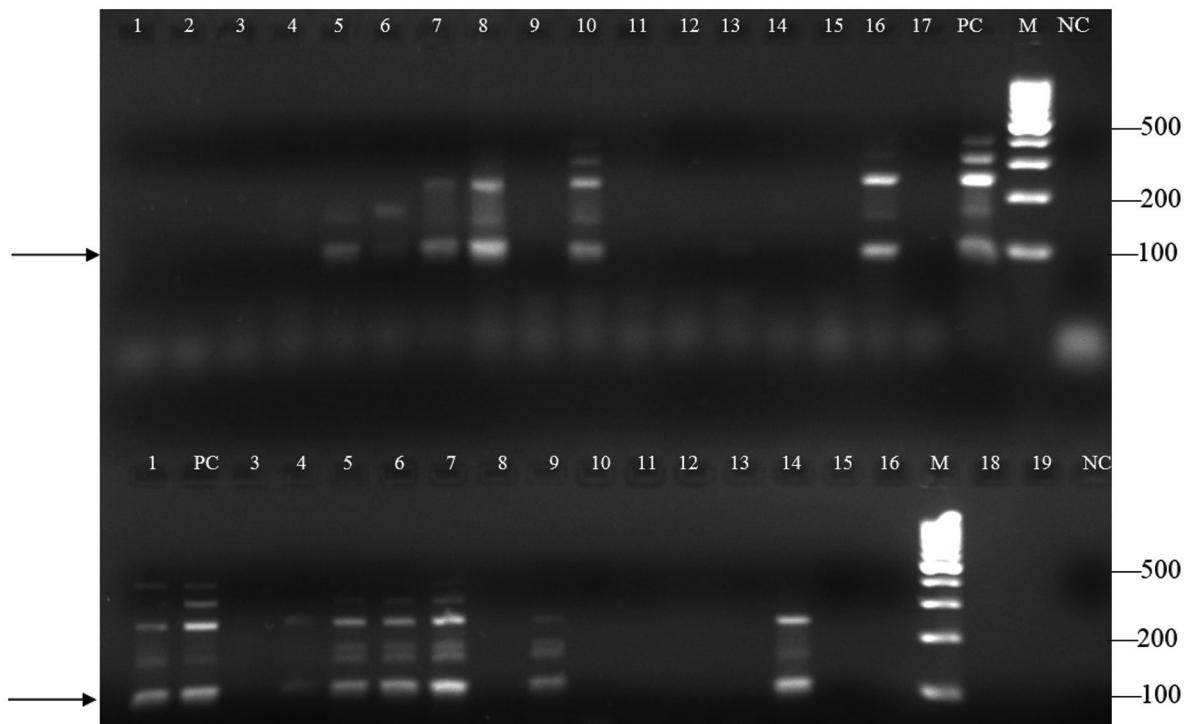


Fig. 2: agarose gel analysis of 91 bp DNA product (black arrows) for the *rpoT* region of *Mycobacterium leprae* by variable number tandem repeat polymerase chain reaction in nasal samples from leprosy cases (C) and healthy controls (Co). Upper panel Lanes 5-8, 10, 16: amplified DNA of Co samples; 1-4, 9, 11-15, 17: nonamplified Co samples; lower panel 1, 4-7, 9, 14: amplified DNA of C samples; 3, 8, 10-13, 15-16: nonamplified C samples; 18, 19: empty; M: 100 bp DNA ladder; NC: negative control (distilled water); PC: positive control (20 pg of chromosomal *M. leprae* DNA).

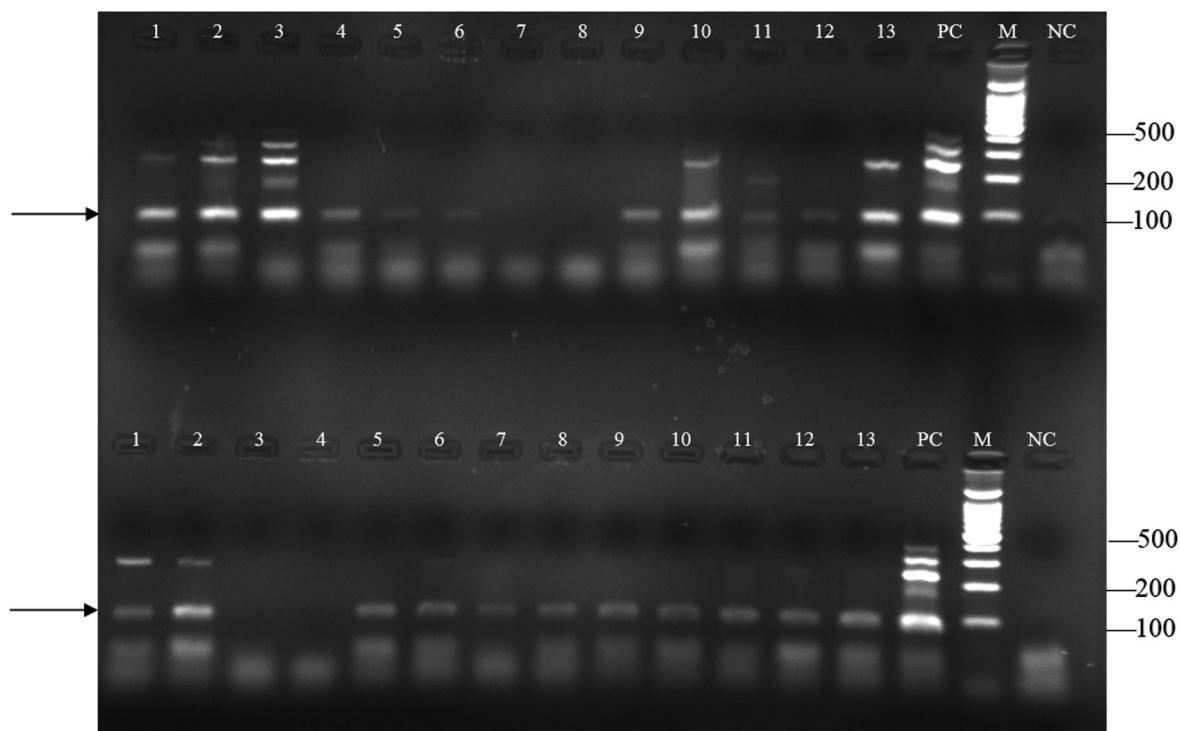


Fig. 3: agarose gel analysis of 91 bp DNA product (black arrows) for the *rpoT* region *Mycobacterium leprae* by variable number tandem repeat (combination 1) polymerase chain reaction in nasal samples from leprosy cases (C). Upper panel Lanes 1-6, 9-13: amplified DNA C samples; 7, 8: nonamplified C samples; lower panel 1, 2, 5-13: amplified DNA C samples; 3, 4: nonamplified C samples; M: 100 bp DNA ladder; NC: negative control (distilled water); PC: positive control (20 pg of chromosomal *M. leprae* DNA).