Rejection of *Clostridium putrificum* and conservation of *Clostridium botulinum* and *Clostridium sporogenes* – Opinion 69

Judicial Commission of the International Committee on Systematic Bacteriology

The Judicial Commission rejected the name *Clostridium putrificum* while conserving *Clostridium botulinum* for toxigenic strains and conserving *Clostridium sporogenes* for non-toxigenic strains.

**Keywords:** *Clostridium putrificum,* *Clostridium botulinum,* *Clostridium sporogenes,* Judicial Opinion 69

Based on DNA–DNA hybridization data, Olsen *et al.* (1995) concluded that the type strains of *Clostridium putrificum* (Trevisan 1889) Reddish and Rettger 1922, *Clostridium botulinum* (van Ermengem 1896) Bergey, Harrison, Breed, Hammer and Huntoon 1923 and *Clostridium sporogenes* (Mechnikoff 1908) Bergey, Harrison, Breed, Hammer and Huntoon 1923 are all genetically related at the species level. Although *Clostridium putrificum* is the older name and thus has priority, the authors cited the great medical importance of the toxigenic species *Clostridium botulinum* and invoked Rules 23a and 56a-5 (Lapage *et al.*, 1992) in requesting rejection of the name *Clostridium putrificum* and conservation of *Clostridium botulinum*, which is next in priority. Furthermore, 'to avoid major confusion and tremendous public, medical industrial and educational expense (not to mention possible public panic) that would result if all strains of this genetic entity were labelled *Clostridium botulinum* the authors invoked Rules 23a and 56b (Lapage *et al.*, 1992) in requesting conservation of the name *Clostridium sporogenes* for those non-toxigenic strains, many of which are used in the canning industry for quality control purposes.

The Judicial Commission considered this request and approved the following Opinion.

**Opinion 69**

The name *Clostridium putrificum* is rejected while *Clostridium botulinum* is conserved for toxigenic strains and *Clostridium sporogenes* is conserved for non-toxigenic strains.

**References**
