Confusing Irregularities in the Nomenclature of Some
Rhodococcus Species

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We draw attention to the fact that there are some confusing irregularities in the authority citations for some species of Rhodococcus on the Approved Lists of Bacterial Names and also in the designation of the type strains of the objective synonyms Rhodococcus equi and Corynebacterium equi.

We draw attention to the fact that there are some confusing irregularities in the authority citations for some species of Rhodococcus on the Approved Lists of Bacterial Names (7). In 1977 Goodfellow and Alderson (3) proposed the new combinations Rhodococcus corallinus, Rhodococcus equi, Rhodococcus erythropolis, Rhodococcus ruber, and Rhodococcus rubropertinctus, and, according to the Approved Lists, these new combinations were validated in 1979 by inclusion on Validation List no. 2 (4). However, only the new combination R. erythropolis appeared on this validation list; therefore, the other combinations were not validated before the publication of the Approved Lists. In accordance with Rule 27 of the International Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria (5), these combinations must date from their valid publication in the International Journal of Systematic Bacteriology, which was in 1980 (7). Therefore, the correct authority citations for these combinations that were omitted from Validation List no. 2 (4) are Rhodococcus corallinus (Bergey, Harrison, Breed, Hammer and Huntoon 1923) Goodfellow and Alderson 1980 (7), Rhodococcus equi (Magnusson 1923) Goodfellow and Alderson 1980 (7), Rhodococcus ruber (Kruse 1896) Goodfellow and Alderson 1980 (7), and Rhodococcus rubropertinctus (Hefferan 1904) Goodfellow and Alderson 1980 (7), and the Approved Lists (7) become the validating publication for these combinations.

Recently, however, Mordarski et al. (6) found that strains of R. corallinus (including the type strain) and R. rubropertinctus belong to a single deoxyribonucleic acid homology group. Therefore, R. corallinus should be regarded as a later subjective synonym of R. rubropertinctus.

A further matter causing confusion is the designation of the type strains for the objective synonyms Corynebacterium equi and R. equi (Table 1). As expected, both strain ATCC 6939T (type strain) and strain ATCC 25729T (type strain) originated from the nomenclatural type strain deposited in the National Collection of Type Cultures as strain NCTC 1621T (type strain) and were later deposited at different times in the American Type Culture Collection via different historical routes.

However, the most recent Catalogue of Strains published by the American Type Culture Collection (2) omits C. equi and lists strain ATCC 6939T as the type strain of R. equi instead of strain ATCC 25729T, which is not listed as a separate entry.

It is confusing to have different strain designations for the type strains of objective synonyms, and although it is contrary to the Approved Lists, it seems advisable to designate strain ATCC 6939T as the type strain of both C. equi and R. equi.

The purpose of this note is to draw the attention of workers in the often-insulted areas of Corynebacterium and Rhodococcus taxonomy and identification to the relationships of the designated type strains to the original deposited type strain. Workers in this field are urged to cross-reference these strains in future publications to avoid further confusion in the literature.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective synonym</th>
<th>Type strain</th>
<th>History before deposit in ATCC</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C. equi</td>
<td>ATCC 6939</td>
<td>NCTC 1621T (from H. Magnusson)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. equi</td>
<td>ATCC 25729</td>
<td>R. E. Gordon (from NCTC 1621T)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a ATCC, American Type Culture Collection, Rockville, Md.; NCTC, National Collection of Type Cultures, London, England.
LITERATURE CITED


