International Committee on Systematic Bacteriology

Subcommittee on Phage Typing of Staphylococci

Minutes of the Meeting, 6 September 1986, Manchester, England

Minute 1. Call to order. The ninth meeting of the subcommittee was called to order at 9:05 a.m. on 6 September 1986 by Chairman K. Rosendal.

Minute 2. Record of attendance. Members present were K. Rosendal (Chairman), R. R. Marples (Acting Secretary), J. Casal, E. T. Cefin, E. M. Cooke, N. El Solh, P. Ewan, C. Godard, S. Haeggman, W. J. van Leeuwen, J. Ojarjarvi, G. Orefici, A. Torres-Pereira, V. T. Rosdahl, M. de Saxe, and A. Vickery. Dr. Klugman represented H. J. Koornhof of South Africa. Apologies were received from T. Hofstad, H. Milch, P. B. Smith, W. Witte, and J. Zdrazdilek.

Minute 3. Election of Chairman. Dr. Rosendal took the opportunity of the meeting to resign the chairmanship. As the first chairman for whom English was not her native language she commented on the pleasure the chairmanship had given her and the support she had received. She proposed W. J. van Leeuwen for the Chair, and this was carried with acclamation.

Minute 4. Position of Secretary. A proposal from the chair that R. R. Marples continue as Acting Secretary was carried nem. con.

Minute 5. Minutes of previous meeting. Minutes of the meeting of 7 August 1982 were accepted as a true record after correction of the date.

Minute 6. Matters arising from the minutes. 6.1. Postal regulations. A discussion took place regarding the cost of air freight deliveries to countries not accepting infectious perishable biological substances through the post. Where air freight was needed the National Laboratory must accept the charge.

6.2. Lytic group V. The question of acceptance of 94/96 as lytic group V was deferred until the new chairman was in post.

Minute 7. Change of chairman. The Chair was taken by W. J. van Leeuwen. She thanked Dr. Rosendal for the work she had done for the subcommittee and congratulated her on the level of activity of the committee.

Minute 8. Acting Secretary’s report. 8.1. Membership. After the 1984 questionnaire, 30 National Centers were resupplied with phages and propagating strains and a further 15 centers are probably active or wish to remain on the mailing list. Three new centers have been started, and the present list of representatives is included as Appendix 1. Corrections should be sent to R. R. Marples, Acting Secretary of the Subcommittee, Division of Hospital Infection, Central Public Health Laboratory, Colindale, London NW9 5HT, England.

8.2. Results of the questionnaire. In 1984 each known center was sent a questionnaire asking whether new phage stocks were required and some questions relating to activity of the center. All 25 countries that replied offered a national typing service, and 18 distributed phages and propagating strains to other institutions. Workload and typability varied. Some ambiguity in the way the questions were stated makes it likely that typability may need to be reassessed at the time of the next distribution in 1988.

8.3. Quality control. After a meeting between the Chairman, the Secretary of the Subcommittee, and the Director of the Division of Hospital Infection an alternative to the regular comparative typing trials was proposed. (i) The Central Public Health Laboratory (CPHL), Colindale, will continue to send out phages and propagating strains (four yearly). The propagating strains can be used as strains with known results for internal quality control within national centers. (ii) Each national center would send 20 strains annually to CPHL, Colindale, with the results obtained.

The discussion of these proposals recognized the effort of preparing strains and receiving and analyzing the results of a comparative typing trial but there was a clear consensus for strains from Colindale being sent to each national center. The possibility of other centers carrying out the analysis should be pursued. The importance of comparability between centers was reiterated, and the differences between quality control and problem solving were emphasized. The CPHL, Colindale, accepted that new proposals should be made and circulated before the next distribution due in 1988. An abbreviated comparative typing trial combined with regular submission of strains seemed the best compromise.

8.4. Other experimental phages. It was accepted that there was a need for circulation of experimental phages that were not expected to enter the international set but which had a special use. Centers that had experimental phages available for distribution should inform the Acting Secretary.

8.4.1. Lytic group V. The subcommittee, after discussion, felt that strains typing with phages 94 and 96 were sufficiently different and adequately described to be the use of the term “lytic group V” for these strains was justified. Lytic group V strains amounted to 10 to 20% of strains in Europe but only 5% in Australia. Experimental phages for subdivision of the group are in use in several centers. Informal exchanges of phages was probably the best solution but these should be reconsidered at a later date.

8.4.2. Methicillin-resistant strains. Several centers reported the use of experimental phages for these often nontypable strains. A possibility of each center supplying other centers directly was raised. Information regarding availability might be distributed through a newsletter.

8.5. Collaborative studies and information collected. In 1985, 26 countries responded to a request to all phage typing centers for strains typical of methicillin-resistant strains circulating in each area. A total of 341 distinct strains were received by the CPHL and were studied intensively. Among the lytic groups II, V and “Miscellaneous” (95 and 81) were not represented, and the frequency of strains of lytic group I was less than expected. The largest number of strains (49%) were in lytic group III, and 34% were nontypable. Typing at RTD × 1,000 increased typability. Antibiotic resistance was very frequent, with resistance to aminoglycoside and macrolide antibiotics shown by nearly 90% of strains.

8.6. Changes in resistance to antibiotics. Various methods for monitoring antibiotic resistance and study of the spread of resistant strains by phage typing on a worldwide basis were discussed. No decision was taken though agreement in principle to the collection of data was made. The CPHL, Colindale, might act as a clearing house for information on
new or unusual resistances perhaps keeping the national centers informed through circulation of a newsletter at intervals.

Minute 9. Other business. 9.1. Additional typing methods. Methods of typing strains not typable at RTD $\times$ 100 were discussed. Typing at RTD $\times$ 1,000 was widely employed, and some centers also used heat shock. The value of reverse typing, particularly in outbreaks, was emphasized. Problems in interpretation of the results were acknowledged.

9.2. Open meeting, 7 September 1986. The open meeting was to take the form of a workshop on methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). R. R. Marples would present the findings for England, N. El Solh for France, and C. Godard for Belgium. R. R. Marples would present the findings of the International Collaborative Study of MRSA. A. Torres-Pereira would present studies on the typing of *Staphylococcus saprophyticus*.

9.3. Vote of thanks. The subcommittee wished to record a vote of thanks to M. de Saxe for her work for the subcommittee.

Minute 10. Close of meeting. No date could be set for the next meeting, and the Chairman called the meeting to a close.

R. R. Marples, Acting Secretary
W. J. van Leeuwen, Chairman