THE STATUS OF THE GENERIC NAMES ARTHROBACTER FISCHER AND ARTHROBACTER CONN AND DIMMICK

Editorial Board
Preliminary Statement

The generic name Arthrobacter was proposed by Fischer (1) in 1895 to include all non-flagellate rod-shaped bacteria which produce arthrospores. No species was named. Later this author (2) in 1903 abandoned the name. A careful search of the literature has revealed that no species has been named and placed in the genus Arthrobacter Fischer. Under Rule 24 of the Bacteriological Code a name must be rejected if it is illegitimate. A name is illegitimate if its application is uncertain (nomen dubium), and it may then be placed in the list of nomina rejicienda.

The validity of publication of the name Arthrobacter Fischer may also be challenged. Rule 12 of the Bacteriological Code requires that to be validly published a name must be "accompanied by a description of the group or by reference to a previously and effectively published description of it." The adequacy of a description of a genus which has no named species is certainly questionable. Validity of publication also requires that the name be accepted by the author, that it should not be a nomen provisiorium anticipating eventual acceptance. It is concluded that the name Arthrobacter Fischer was not validly published and hence is "without standing in nomenclature."

Arthrobacter was also proposed as a generic name by Conn and Dimmick (3) in 1947. They state that they desired "to revive by emendation, an old name, Arthrobacter Fischer (1895), which as originally proposed was a nomen nudum, as no species were named, and it was subsequently abandoned even by its author." The generic name was cited as "Arthrobacter Fischer, emend." A type species A. globiforme (Conn) Conn and Dimmick and two other species were described.

Several questions arise relative to Conn and Dimmick's "revival" of the generic name Arthrobacter Fischer.

1. Should Fischer be cited as the author of the generic name Arthrobacter as described by Conn and Dimmick?
   It is concluded above that the name was not validly pub-
lished, and is quite without standing in nomenclature. In other words, it never was a generic name that could be recognized or revived.

2. Was the generic name *Arthrobacter* validly published by Conn and Dimmick? The publication of the name meets all of the pertinent provisions of Section 3 of the Bacteriological Code.

3. Is the generic name *Arthrobacter* as proposed by Conn and Dimmick legitimate? A legitimate name is one that does not contravene a rule. This generic name is not a later homonym of any validly published earlier name of a genus of bacteria, of plants or protozoa. It meets the test of legitimacy.

4. How should the generic name be cited? As *Arthrobacter* Conn and Dimmick 1947.

**Draft Proposals for Opinions**

1. The bacterial generic name *Arthrobacter* Fischer 1895 was not validly published and has no standing in bacteriological nomenclature. It is placed in the list of *nomina generum rejicienda*.

2. The bacterial generic name *Arthrobacter* proposed by Conn and Dimmick (1947) was not an emendation of *Arthrobacter* Fischer. It was validly published as a *nomen novum* and should be cited as *Arthrobacter* Conn and Dimmick 1947.

**REFERENCES**