LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Legionella taurinensis, a new species of Legionella isolated in Turin, Italy

Lo Presti et al. (1999) reported in their article the description of a new Legionella species, Legionella taurinensis. We think it useful to provide some information about the origin of the type strain of this new species. The type strain reported as Turin I no. 1T (ATCC 700508T) and the strains Turin I no. 2, Turin II no. 180 and Turin II no. 195 of the ‘Turin cluster’ have been isolated in our laboratory, the Infectious Diseases Institute of Turin, University of Turin (Legionella Reference Center for Piedmont Region) in March 1988 (Director Professor Paolo Gioannini) from a water sample of an oxygen bubble humidifier. The specimens were collected in a big university hospital (1850 beds) in Turin, where nosocomial Legionella infection occurred.

The strains were brought by Dr L. Franzin (who isolated the strains) to Centre National de Référence des Legionella, Lyon, France (Director Professor J. Fleurette), where she attended a stage in March 1988. The strains were identified as Legionella spiritensis by Dr N. Bornstein. Two papers reported the results of the studies about these strains (Franzin et al., 1990, 1993).

Lo Presti et al. (1999) found that these strains reacting with antisera raised against L. spiritensis serogroup I displayed red autofluorescence under longwave UV light and showed some differences from L. spiritensis. Phenotypic and genotypic characteristics have led to the conclusion that these strains were a new species of Legionella, for which the name Legionella taurinensis was proposed. Lo Presti et al. said that the type strain is Turin I no. 1T (ATCC 700508T), which was isolated from a humidifier in the city of Turin (Italy). Lo Presti et al. did not cite the origin of these strains, probably because they were not completely informed about the source of the strain L. taurinensis.

References


Laura Franzin and Paolo Gioannini
Infectious Diseases Unit, University of Turin, Corso Svizzera 164, 10149 Turin, Italy