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*Edwardsiella tarda* Ewing and McWhorter 1965 was originally validly published under the 1958 revision of the International Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria and Viruses (Editorial Board of the International Committee on Bacteriological Nomenclature, 1958) and was also designated as the nomenclatural type of the genus *Edwardsiella* Ewing and McWhorter 1965 (Ewing et al., 1965). Other studies had indicated that another organism studied in Japan and published under the name *Paracolobactrum anguillimortiferum* Hoshina 1962 shared almost identical properties. The name was initially validly published under the 1958 revision of the International Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria and Viruses. Sakazaki & Tamura (1975) drew attention to the fact that, based on a comparison of a large number of strains of *Edwardsiella tarda* Ewing and McWhorter 1965 with the type strain of *Edwardsiella tarda* Ewing and McWhorter 1965 and the data published for *Paracolobactrum anguillimortiferum* Hoshina 1962, these two species appeared to be identical in all common properties tested. Sakazaki & Tamura (1975) came to the conclusion that under the then current 1966 revision of the International Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria (Editorial Board, 1966), the names *Edwardsiella tarda* Ewing and McWhorter 1965 and *Paracolobactrum anguillimortiferum* Hoshina 1962 were both validly published, despite the fact that there did not appear to be an extant type strain of *Paracolobactrum anguillimortiferum* Hoshina 1962. Sakazaki & Tamura (1975) also came to the conclusion that both taxa should be included in the genus *Edwardsiella* Ewing and McWhorter 1965 and that the epithet *anguillimortifera* Hoshina 1962 over the epithet *tarda* Ewing and McWhorter 1965 had priority over the epithet *tarda* Ewing and McWhorter 1965 in *Edwardsiella tarda* Ewing and McWhorter 1965 (Approved Lists 1980). The question of the priority of the epithet *anguillimortifera* Hoshina 1962 over the epithet *tarda* Ewing and McWhorter 1965 has been raised in the past, and a Request for an Opinion to conserve the epithet *tarda* Ewing and McWhorter 1965 in *Edwardsiella tarda* Ewing and McWhorter 1965 (Approved Lists 1980) was published but later withdrawn. Close examination of the wording of the International Code of Nomenclature of Prokaryotes indicates that there may be problems associated with the nomenclatural type of *Edwardsiella anguillimortifera* (Hoshina 1962) Sakazaki and Tamura 1975 (Approved Lists 1980). Additional issues also arise with the recognition of homonyms under other codes of nomenclature.
Congress in Munich as having been withdrawn (Holt, 1979).

The names Edwardsiella tarda Ewing and McWhorter 1965 (Approved Lists 1980) and Edwardsiella anguillimortifera (Hoshina 1962) Sakazaki and Tamura 1975 (Approved Lists 1980) were included on the Approved Lists (Skerman et al., 1980) with the type strain cited for both species as being ATCC 15947. Edwardsiella tarda Ewing and McWhorter 1965 (Approved Lists 1980) was also listed as the nomenclatural type of Edwardsiella Ewing and McWhorter 1965 (Approved Lists 1980) (Skerman et al., 1980).

Based on the fact that Edwardsiella tarda Ewing and McWhorter 1965 (Approved Lists 1980) and Edwardsiella anguillimortifera (Hoshina 1962) Sakazaki and Tamura 1975 (Approved Lists 1980) share the same nomenclatural type, it has been generally assumed that these two names are homotypic synonyms. While this is true if one considers that both names are based on the same nomenclatural type on the Approved Lists (Skerman et al., 1980), examination of the history of valid publication under previous revisions of the Code indicates that there may be an error in the interpretation of the Code, both past and present (Editorial Board of the International Committee on Bacteriological Nomenclature, 1958; Edition Board, 1966; Lapage et al., 1975, 1992; Parker et al., 2015). Examination of the publications by Ewing et al. (1965) and Hoshina (1962) indicate that they were working with different strains from different sources. It is not clear whether Hoshina (1962) was working with more than one strain and also did not designate a nomenclatural type. In recognizing that Edwardsiella tarda Ewing and McWhorter 1965 and ‘Paracolobactrum anguillimortiferum’ Hoshina 1962 belonged to the same species, Sakazaki & Tamura (1975) chose to designate a neotype for the new combination Edwardsiella anguillimortifera (Hoshina 1962) Sakazaki and Tamura 1975 and selected the nomenclatural type of Edwardsiella tarda Ewing and McWhorter 1965, ATCC 15947. The 1966 revision of the Code (Editorial Board, 1966) in effect at the time and all subsequent revisions of the Code state that ‘the nomenclatural type is that element of a taxon with which a name is permanently attached.’ In other words, ATCC 15947 is the nomenclatural type of Edwardsiella tarda Ewing and McWhorter 1965 (Approved Lists 1980). There would appear to be no justification for also using ATCC 15947 [the nomenclatural type of Edwardsiella tarda Ewing and McWhorter 1965 (Approved Lists 1980)] as the nomenclatural type of Edwardsiella anguillimortifera (Hoshina 1962) Sakazaki and Tamura 1975 (Approved Lists 1980). Interpretation of the original literature indicates that Edwardsiella tarda Ewing and McWhorter 1965 (Approved Lists 1980) and Edwardsiella anguillimortifera (Hoshina 1962) Sakazaki and Tamura 1975 (Approved Lists 1980) were based on the study of different strains and the names are homotypic synonyms, not homotypic synonyms. The designation of ATCC 15947 as the neotype of Edwardsiella anguillimortifera (Hoshina 1962) Sakazaki and Tamura 1975 (Approved Lists 1980) clearly also contravenes Rule 9a of the 1966 revision of the Code and Rule 15 of the 1975, 1990 and 2008 revisions of the Code (Lapage et al., 1975, 1992; Parker et al., 2015). Had Sakazaki & Tamura, 1975 shown Edwardsiella tarda Ewing and McWhorter 1965 and ‘Paracolobactrum anguillimortiferum’ Hoshina 1962 to be synonyms and in the absence of a type strain for ‘Paracolobactrum anguillimortiferum’ Hoshina 1962 based the nomenclatural type of Edwardsiella anguillimortifera (Hoshina 1962) Sakazaki and Tamura 1975 on the description and illustration of Hoshina (1962), then it would be obvious that Edwardsiella tarda Ewing and McWhorter 1965 and ‘Paracolobactrum anguillimortiferum’ Hoshina 1962 were heterotypic synonyms. Ilacing Edwardsiella tarda Ewing and McWhorter 1965 (Approved Lists 1980) and Edwardsiella anguillimortifera (Hoshina 1962) Sakazaki and Tamura 1975 (Approved Lists 1980) on the Approved Lists (Skerman et al., 1980) based on the same nomenclatural type contravenes Rule 15 of the 1975, 1990 and 2008 revisions of the Code (Lapage et al., 1975, 1992; Parker et al., 2015), and Rule 51b (1) indicates that Edwardsiella anguillimortifera (Hoshina 1962) Sakazaki and Tamura 1975 (Approved Lists 1980) is illegitimate and may not be used. Illegitimate names or epithets may also not be taken into consideration for the purpose of determining priority. The key aspect being that ATCC 15947 is the nomenclatural type of Edwardsiella tarda Ewing and McWhorter 1965 (Approved Lists 1980) and may not also serve as the nomenclatural type of Edwardsiella anguillimortifera (Hoshina 1962) Sakazaki and Tamura 1975 (Approved Lists 1980).

In essence, a closer examination of the wording of the Code in the 1975, 1990 and 2008 revisions (Lapage et al., 1975, 1992; Parker et al., 2015) clearly demonstrates that because Edwardsiella tarda Ewing and McWhorter 1965 (Approved Lists 1980) and Edwardsiella anguillimortifera (Hoshina 1962) Sakazaki and Tamura 1975 (Approved Lists 1980) share the same nomenclatural type, the proposal of Sakazaki & Tamura (1975) created an illegitimate combination and the epithet anguillimortifera is also associated with the nomenclatural type of Edwardsiella tarda Ewing and McWhorter 1965 (Approved Lists 1980). Under these circumstances, the name Edwardsiella anguillimortifera (Hoshina 1962) Sakazaki and Tamura 1975 (Approved Lists 1980) is illegitimate, may not be used and may also not be taken into consideration when determining priority. Consequently, the name of the taxon based on ATCC 15947 is Edwardsiella tarda Ewing and McWhorter 1965 (Approved Lists 1980). This resolves the issue of the widely accepted opinion that Edwardsiella anguillimortifera (Hoshina 1962) Sakazaki and Tamura 1975 (Approved Lists 1980) is an earlier homotypic synonym of Edwardsiella tarda Ewing and McWhorter 1965 (Approved Lists 1980) and that the correct name of the taxon based on ATCC 15947 should be Edwardsiella anguillimortifera (Hoshina 1962) Sakazaki and Tamura 1975 (Approved Lists 1980).

In examining the literature on the genus name Edwardsiella, reference to four different authors and dates can be found:

Edwardsiella Ewing and McWhorter 1965 (Approved Lists 1980) – prokaryote;
Edwardsiella Andres 1883 – sea anemone;
Edwardsiella Rukhin 1937 – fossil Anthozoa (substituted synonym Cylindrostyly Sokolov 1955);
Edwardsiella Versteegh & Zevenboom 1995 – fossil dinoflagellate (substituted synonym Novedwardsiella Özdikmen 2009);

(see Andres, 1883; Rukhin, 1937; Sokolov, 1955; Versteegh & Zevenboom, 1995; Özdikmen, 2009).

The International Code of Nomenclature of Prokaryotes (Parker et al., 2015) is not independent of botanical and zoological nomenclature (Principle 2). Based on this information, Edwardsiella Ewing and McWhorter 1965 (Approved Lists 1980) is a later homonym of Edwardsiella Andres1883 at the rank of genus (Rule 11 Note), but according to Rule 51b (4), Edwardsiella Ewing and McWhorter 1965 (Approved Lists 1980) is not an illegitimate name and no further action is required.

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References
