Report (1966–1970) of the Subcommittee on the Taxonomy of the *Neisseriaceae* to the International Committee on Nomenclature of Bacteria

14 August 1970

Mexico City, Mexico

Although no cooperative project was sponsored by the Subcommittee, a considerable amount of research has been published recently which affects the systematics of the *Neisseriaceae*. This includes descriptions of new species of *Neisseria* (2, 4, 11, 18, 19) and of new serological groups of *N. meningitidis* (10, 12, 16, 17); genetic, physiological, and structural studies leading to reevaluations of relations between species of *Neisseria* (8, 9, 14); recommendations that *N. catarrhalis* be transferred from *Neisseria* to another genus (7, 9) and *N. haemolyans* to another family (1, 15); and that *Moraxella* be included as a genus of *Neisseriaceae* (9).

The Subcommittee considered the question of the specific epithet for the meningococcus and agreed that it should be *Neisseria meningitidis*. Opinion 35 was published to this effect (13).

Meetings of the Subcommittee were held on 10 and 12 August 1970 during the Xth International Congress for Microbiology at Mexico City. Members present were: B. W. Catlin (Secretary and Acting Chairman), U. Berger, K. Jyssum, Alice Reyn, M. Rogosa, N. A. Vedros, and M. Véron. D. Ivler was elected Chairman to serve until the next International Congress, replacing M. J. Pelczar, Jr., who resigned as Chairman (1970).

A. Reyn, a liaison member from the *Moraxella* Subcommittee, summarized the work of that Subcommittee. She reported their discussion of the utility of placing in the family *Neisseriaceae* the genera *Moraxella* and, temporarily, *Acinetobacter* (which comprises both *Moraxella glucidolytica* and *M. lwoffii*). Thus, *Neisseriaceae* would include the genera *Neisseria*, *Branhamella*, *Moraxella* and, temporarily, *Acinetobacter*.

U. Berger described physiological studies of lactose-fermenting meningococcus-like strains isolated from humans in Germany. His findings indicate that these organisms are distinct from *N. meningitidis* (3) and support the recommendation that they be recognized as a new species, *N. lactamicus* (*sic*) (11) (this should be *N. lactamica*).

N. A. Vedros described a bacteriological survey initiated because of the finding that sera from a variety of experimental animal species contain genus-specific antibodies against *neisseriae*. Nasopharyngeal cultures from these animals yielded strains of *Neisseria*, some of which apparently have not been described previously.

The rod-shaped isolate designated *N. elongata* (4) was briefly discussed. The reported genetic compatibilities raise important questions and suggest that the organism will be valuable in future investigations.

The Subcommittee considered the problem inherent in the loss of well described, significant bacterial strains and suggested that selected representatives of older collections, for example those of Sara Branham and Henry Scherp, might be studied and deposited in permanent culture collections.

Years ago the *Neisseriaceae* Subcommittee recommended that the four recognized serological groups of *N. meningitidis* be designated Groups A, B, C, and D (5). Branham studied many representatives and selected neotype strains for each (6). More recently meningococcal strains have been isolated in various countries which cannot be grouped with antisera against Groups A, B, C, or D (10, 12, 16, 17). These have been given a confusing variety of designations. Recognizing the importance of developing a uniform and internationally acceptable system, the Subcommittee agreed that guidelines should be formulated for establishing further serogroups. As a basis for such recommendations, comparative studies are needed of various recent meningococcal isolates which have significant new antigens. An ad hoc committee consisting of N. A. Vedros (Chairman), D. Ivler, K. Jyssum, and M. Vandekerkove was organized to undertake this work. Other concerned investigators may be added to this ad hoc committee.

The membership of the Subcommittee was decreased to seven by the death (24 June 1968) of Hattie E. Alexander and by the resignation (May 1969) of A. Charlotte Ruys. Five new

members were then elected (Bøvre, Ivler, Vandekerkove, Vedros, and Véron).

The present membership of the Subcommittee is as follows: D. Ivler (Chairman), Los Angeles, California, USA; B. W. Catlin (Secretary), Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA; U. Berger, Heidelberg, Germany; K. Bøvre, Oslo, Norway; K. Jysum, Oslo, Norway; L. Lapeyssonnie, Marseille, France; M. J. Pelczar, Jr., College Park, Maryland, USA; Alice Reyn, Copenhagen, Denmark; M. Rogosa, Bethesda, Maryland, USA; M. Vandekerkove, Marseille, France; N. A. Vedros, Oakland, California, USA; and M. Véron, Paris, France.

B. W. Catlin
Secretary

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