Proposal to Conserve the Specific Epithet *tarda* over the Specific Epithet *anguillimortiferum* in the Name of the Organism Presently Known as *Edwardsiella tarda*

Request for an Opinion

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We propose that the specific epithet *tarda* be conserved over the specific epithet *anguillimortiferum* in the scientific name *Edwardsiella tarda* Ewing et al. 1965. Although the name *Paracolobactrum anguillimortiferum* was applied to what may be the same organism and was validly published by Hoshina in 1962, the name remained obscure until it was rediscovered by Sakazaki and Tamura in 1975. Meanwhile, the name *Edwardsiella tarda* has gained worldwide acceptance. For stability in nomenclature and to avoid confusion in the literature, the specific epithet *tarda* should be retained.

Between 1962 and 1965 three research groups working independently described a new group of bacteria in the family *Enterobacteriaceae*. Sakazaki and Murata called these bacteria the "Asakusa Group" (8), and King and Adler called them the "Bartholomew Group" (7). In 1965 Ewing and co-workers described 37 isolates of this group and placed them in a new genus, *Edwardsiella*, with a single species, *Edwardsiella tarda* (3).

In 1975 Sakazaki and Tamura (9) pointed out that in 1962 Hoshina (4) described a new bacterium that he called *Paracolobactrum anguillimortiferum* (no type strain was designated by Hoshina, and apparently no cultures of the strains on which Hoshina based his description have survived). Sakazaki and Tamura correctly stated that, if *Paracolobactrum anguillimortiferum* and *Edwardsiella tarda* are synonyms, then the specific epithet *anguillimortiferum* would have priority, since it was validly published 3 years before the specific epithet *tarda*. Sakazaki and Tamura "proposed *Edwardsiella anguillimortifera* (Hoshina comb. nov. to replace the illegitimate combination *Edwardsiella tarda* (9)."

We propose that the specific epithet *tarda* be conserved over the specific epithet *anguillimortiferum* in *Edwardsiella* on the basis of the following considerations. Since the name *Edwardsiella tarda* was published in the International Bulletin of Bacteriological Nomenclature and Taxonomy 10 years ago (3), it has gained worldwide acceptance by bacteriologists. No other name for this organism appears in *Bergey's Manual of Determinative Bacteriology*

(2). The name *Paracolobactrum anguillimortiferum* was published in the Japanese Bulletin of Scientific Fisheries (4), a journal unlikely to reach working bacteriologists. As a consequence, the latter name has seldom been used for this organism. *P. anguillimortiferum* does not appear in the *Index Bergeyana* (1), published 4 years after the name appeared in print.

We suggest that conservation of the specific epithet *tarda* can be justified by citing Principle 1 of the International Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria and Viruses (5): "The essential points in nomenclature are (1) to aim at fixity of names; (2) to avoid or to reject the use of names which may cause error or ambiguity or throw science into confusion." The stability of nomenclature would be served best by conserving the specific epithet *tarda* over the specific epithet *anguillimortiferum*. Acceptance of the latter epithet would violate the intent of Principle 1 as quoted above.

In Opinion 18 (6), the Judicial Commission of the International Committee on Bacteriological Nomenclature conserved *typhi* over *typhosa* as the specific epithet for the typhoid bacillus despite the fact that *typhosa* had priority over *typhi*. In issuing its opinion, the Judicial Commission cited Principle 1 of the International Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria and Viruses. Their decision was based upon the more common usage of the epithet *typhi* as compared with that of the epithet *typhosa*. In the opinion, it was stated "that acceptance of *typhi* rather than *typhosa* was desirable in order to minimize confusion in the literature (6)."

Therefore, in the interest of stability in nomenclature and to avoid confusion in the litera-

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ture, we request that the Judicial Commission of the International Committee on Systematic Bacteriology issue an opinion conserving the specific epithet *tarda* over *anguillimortiferum* in the scientific name *Edwardsiella tarda* (Ewing and McWhorter). The type strain would remain ATCC 15947 (= CDC 1483-59).

REPRINT REQUESTS

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