International Committee on Systematic Bacteriology Subcommittee on the Taxonomy of Mycobacteria

Minutes of the Meeting, 11 August 1982, Boston, Massachusetts

Session 1. Open meeting

Minute 1. Call to order. The meeting was called to order at 13:00 by the Chairman, L. G. Wayne.

Minute 2. Record of attendance. The members present were M. Ridell (alternate for A. Lind), M. Magnusson, F. Portael (alternate for S. R. Pattyn), E. H. Runyon, H. Saito, and L. G. Wayne. The members absent were W. Kämpfer, H. H. Kleeberg, G. P. Kubica, G. Meissner, and J. Stanford.

Minute 3. Visitors. M. Goodfellow, representing the *Nocardia* Subcommittee, and L. Barksdale, representing the Subcommittee on *Corynebacterium* and Coryneform Bacteria, participated in the meeting.

Minute 4. In memoriam. A tribute was paid to the memory of Kenji Takeya, a long-time member of this Subcommittee, who passed away on 22 January 1982.

Minute 5. Definition of genera. M. Goodfellow led a discussion on the status of genera and families in the order *Actinomycetales*. Of special concern was the availability of resources to perform tests for circumscribing *Mycobacterium* to be included in the minimal standards for the species. Two major criteria were recognized as important to this goal; these were measurement of the guanine-plus-cytosine content of the deoxyribonucleic acid and the detection of mycolic acids and their distinction from nocardomycolic and corynomycolic acids. D. Minnikin has agreed to explore methods for simplifying the recognition of mycolic acids. The Subcommittee will ask I. Baess for advice on a common resource for determination of guanine-plus-cytosine that may be isolated from newly proposed species by the investigators proposing the species. L. Barksdale reported some sentiment from his subcommittee for separating *Corynebacterium* from the coryneform bacteria and suggested inclusion of *Corynebacterium* in the *Mycobacterium* Subcommittee. This suggestion received no support from the *Mycobacterium* Subcommittee, but it was agreed that representatives from the Subcommittees on *Mycobacterium*, *Nocardia*, *Corynebacterium* and Coryneform Bacteria, and the Actinomycetes should be asked to form an ad hoc committee to explore possible areas of collaborative effort.

Minute 6. Minimal standards. L. G. Wayne reported on a meeting of the International Committee on Systematic Bacteriology Taxonomic Subcommittee officers held on 7 August 1982, with special attention to the problem of minimal standards. It had been the consensus at that meeting that each subcommittee would have to decide its own goals in terms of emphasis on features for genus characterization versus species characterization. Wayne suggested that standards for the *Mycobacterium* Subcommittee might include a very few features for establishing genera, two or three features for separating rapid growers and slow growers, and between 10 and 20 features for establishing which existing species a newly proposed species most closely resembles

(thus permitting judicious selection of reference strains for comparison by individual investigators). This subject will be explored in detail at the next International Working Group on Mycobacterial Taxonomy meeting.

Minute 7. Status of agglutinating serovar studies. At the 1981 meeting of the International Working Group on Mycobacterial Taxonomy in Paris, guidelines were adopted for a permissive study on the reproducibility of serovar determinations; R. Good will initiate the study as soon as possible.

Minute 8. Approved Lists and new validations and revivals. The 1980 Approved Lists included 41 species in the genus *Mycobacterium*. Since the Approved Lists appeared, one new name has been validated, and seven others have been revived.

Minute 9. "Good" taxonomy versus nomenclatural stability. The conflict between molecular-level studies (deoxyribonucleic acid homology and protein immunological relatedness), which show that *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* and *Mycobacterium bovis* are virtually indistinguishable from one another, and phenetic differentiation based on selected tests, which is important on epidemiological grounds, was discussed. No specific proposals were adopted for changing the status of the two species.

Session 2. Closed meeting

Minute 10. Call to order. The meeting was reconvened in closed session at 16:00.

Minute 11. Record of attendance. Those in attendance were as recorded above.

Minute 12. Minutes of the previous meeting. The minutes of the 1978 meeting were approved as published (Int. J. Syst. Bacteriol. 32:248-249, 1982).

Minute 13. Membership of the Subcommittee. As noted above, K. Takeya passed away in January 1982. A letter of retirement from the Subcommittee was received from L. Sula, dated 16 April 1982. At the present meeting E. H. Runyon and G. P. Kubica also announced their retirement from the Subcommittee. At this meeting additional names were proposed, but it was decided to distribute postal ballots before extending invitations.

Minute 14. Officers. Because of a need for continuity, A. Lind, on behalf of the Subcommittee, asked L. G. Wayne to remain as Chairman for another term, and he agreed to do so. The retirement of G. P. Kubica from the Subcommittee necessitated selection of a new Secretary. M. Magnusson and S. R. Pattyn were nominated, and the election will be held by postal ballot.

Minute 15. Resolution. M. Magnusson introduced a resolution thanking E. H. Runyon and G. P. Kubica for their many years of leadership of this Subcommittee. The resolution was adopted by acclamation.

The meeting was adjourned at 16:42 on 11 August.

LAWRENCE G. WAYNE, *Chairman*