INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF BACTERIOLOGICAL
NOMENCLATURE AND TAXONOMY

Volume 8 No. 1

January 15, 1958

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REPORT OF THE LEPTOSPIRA SUBCOMMITTEE TO THE
INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE ON BACTERIOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

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Leptospira Subcommittee

At a meeting of the Subcommittee held in 1953 during the Sixth International Congress for Microbiology it was agreed that the serological characteristics of strains of leptospire provides the best basis for classification available at present. These characteristics are determined by agglutination-lysis and agglutinin-absorption tests, so the Subcommittee has been engaged in studying the techniques used by different workers in an attempt to obtain agreement on standardized methods. In this work the Subcommittee has received the collaboration of the Leptospira Study Group of WHO/FAO. A meeting of the Group, which included eight members of the Subcommittee, was convened at Amsterdam in November 1955, by the Secretary, Dr. M. M. Kaplan. At that meeting agreement was reached on what were considered to be satisfactory methods of carrying out these serological tests, and the conclusions were published as World Health Organization Technical Report Series No. 113 entitled "Diagnosis and Typing in Leptospirosis".

As was mentioned in the Minutes of the last meeting, the Subcommittee were in favour, in theory, of the preparation and issue of Standard Agglutinating Antisera. In practice, however, financial considerations would probably create difficulties. Through the good offices of WHO arrangements have been made for small quantities of dried antisera suitable for preliminary trials to be prepared by the Army Medical Service Graduate School, Washington, D. C., U.S.A.; the Istituto Superiore di Sanita, Rome, Italy; and the National Institute of Health, Tokyo, Japan.

One of the activities undertaken by the Subcommittee was the establishment of "Libraries of Reprints" in a number of countries (now eleven in all) at Institutes specially interested in leptospiral investigations. Reprints of articles are obtained by the Secretary as soon as possible after publication, and are distributed to the Libraries where they can be consulted by any interested worker. During the last four years copies of nearly 300 articles have been added to the libraries.