

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INSTITUT PASTEUR, PARIS XV

Dear Sir,

Permit me to make some remarks about the article of Professor H. C. de Souza-Araujo "Bacteriology of Rat Leprosy" which appeared in the July number of your esteemed journal (31, 3, 178).

The acid-alcohol-fast bacilli which this author has cultivated certainly do not live in symbiosis with the strain of Stefansky bacilli obtained by the passage on rats of our laboratory. In fact, the lesions of the rats which we send to the investigators who ask for them are always excised aseptically and very carefully controlled from the bacteriological point of view, in inoculating them on various media for culture. Thus all possibility of contamination of our strain by other acid-alcohol-fast bacilli can be excluded. Besides, the very numerous attempts at culture of the Stefansky bacillus which we carry out regularly from the lesions of rats inoculated with this strain have never up to now resulted in the appearance of a culture of acid-alcohol-fast bacilli of any type.

Moreover, at the Fifth International Congress of Microbiology at Rio de Janeiro, 1950, which I attended, Prof. de Souza-Araujo had not envisaged, at any time, the possibility of a bacillary symbiosis, but on the contrary he affirmed that the cultures of the bacilli of Hansen and of Stefansky had succeeded. In the course of the discussion I said that I was persuaded that he was only dealing with para-tuberculous bacilli. I have not changed my mind since then.

If the acid-alcohol-fast bacilli cultivated by Prof. de Souza-Araujo really provide an example of a bacillary symbiosis, and I rather doubt this, this finding is peculiar to his laboratory.

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