

CORRESPONDENCE

This department is for the publication of informal communications that are of interest because they are informative and stimulating, and for the discussion of controversial matters.

***Mycobacterium leprae* in Foot Pads of Hairless Mice**

TO THE EDITOR:

Two studies have been published on the multiplication of *M. leprae* in different mouse strains^(1, 3). We have now succeeded in following the multiplication of three strains of *M. leprae* comparatively in white mice (NMRI strain) and hairless mice, although a number of the mice died during the observation period. The results are summarized in Table I.

Strain 2401: There were no significant differences in total counts of *M. leprae* between the two groups of mice, but harvests from hairless mice produced higher solid ratios.

Strain 3/63: The harvests from hairless mice were constantly higher without difference in solid ratios.

Strain: 6382: Total harvests were equal for both groups, but solid counts in hairless mice were higher.

The very low solid ratios observed after 12 months in the case of Strain 3/63 show that in hairless mice the growth curve of *M. leprae* shows a plateau or ceiling effect just as in the case of white mice⁽²⁾.

Testicles, kidneys, liver and spleen of hairless mice inoculated with Strain 3/63 were examined histologically; neither lesions nor acid-fast bacilli were detected. All hairless mice were also inoculated subcutaneously in the back; only rarely were acid-fast bacilli found at this site.

Altogether our experience indicates that, as hosts for *M. leprae*, hairless mice are not superior on comparison with conventional mice.

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TABLE I. *M. leprae* in foot pads of hairless mice in comparison with NMRI mice.

Strain No. and inoculum size	Time (mos.)	NMRI mice		Hairless mice	
		Harvests $\times 10^6$	Solid/nonsolid	Harvests $\times 10^6$	Solid/nonsolid
2401 1.5×10^3	6	0.93	0.65	1.8	0.93
	7	1.0	0.42	1.2	0.90
	7.5	0.5	0.43	0.54	0.88
3/63 6×10^3	8	0.56	0.88	10	0.63
		1.1	0.50	1.6	0.45
		0.19	0.70	9.6	0.65
		0.25	0.67	1.5	0.56
	9	0.19	0.72	1.9	N.D.
		1.5		1.5	0.64
		10		1.3	0.83
		12		1.7	0.07
				1.5	0.13
6382 3×10^3	7	0.03		0.03	
	10	0.14	0.58	0.14	0.80
		0.44	0.56	0.068	0.90