Prokaryotic taxonomy rules and nomenclature changes in the *Mycobacterium chelonae-abscessus* group: author reply

Sylvia Cardoso Leão¹, Rafael Silva Duarte² & Erica Chimara³

¹Departamento de Microbiologia, Imunologia e Parasitologia, Universidade Federal de São Paulo, Rua Botucatu 862 3º andar, São Paulo-SP, Brazil

²Instituto de Microbiologia, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

³Setor de Micobactérias, Instituto Adolfo Lutz, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

*Author for correspondence: sylvia.leao@unifesp.br

We thank Jorge Sampaio for his interest in our paper and appreciate his suggestions regarding the taxonomy of rapidly growing mycobacteria. His concern about the nomenclature of members of the *Mycobacterium chelonae-abscessus* group is justifiable. After an extensive phenotypic and genotypic characterization of members of the *M. chelonae-abscessus* group, Leao *et al.* proposed the union of *M. abscessus*, *M. bolletii* and *M. massiliense* and the recognition of two subspecies within *M. abscessus*: *M. abscessus* subsp. *abscessus* and *M. abscessus* subsp. *massiliense* [1]. The name 'massiliense' was chosen as it appeared first in the literature. A note has been submitted and is under evaluation in the *International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology (IJSEM)* to provide a complete and strict systematic description of *M. abscessus* and its subspecies in accordance with the Rules of the *Bacteriological Code* (1990 Revision) [2,3]. In this note, the name *M. abscessus* subsp. *massiliense* is corrected to *M. abscessus* subsp. *bolletii* because according to Rule 24b (2) the name *M. bolletii* has priority over the name *M. massiliense*; these taxa are heterotypic synonyms and, according

to Rule 38, must be united under the name *M. bolletii*; and finally, according to Rule 50b, the name of the subspecies must be *M. abscessus* subsp. *bolletii*. However, we disagree with publishing an erratum because at the time our paper was published in *Future Microbiology* [4] the nomenclature of the proposed *M. abscessus* subspecies was not validated and there was only one reference available for citation, that of Leao *et al.* [1]. Moreover, a detailed description of the cited species and subspecies is required and a possible change in the nomenclature of these taxa in the future is still under consideration by the *IJSEM*.

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