

Commentary on: 'Thermostability of β -xylosidase from *Aspergillus sydowii* MG49' by M. Ghosh and G. Nanda, FEBS Letters 330, 275–278 (1993)

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A fungal culture designated *Aspergillus sydowii* which formed the basis for at least three research publications [1–3] was deposited in our collection centre, a national facility where microbes are preserved by the most modern methods. Surprisingly the culture was found to be *Penicillium citrinum* instead. The authors got their fungus identified by the CAB International Mycological Institute, UK, probably during 1992 [1], and the culture was maintained on 2% malt agar slants [2]. The first paper was sent for publication in June 1992, the second in June 1993 and the last during May 1994. It would be a mystery when the fungus *Penicillium* had replaced *Aspergillus* in their slants during those two years, and this may be a classic case of frequent transfer onto agar slants leading to contaminant replacing the original organism [4], underlining the necessity to preserve microbes following modern preservation protocols.

To add to the dubiousness of the results, a few culture tubes showed the presence of another fungus, *Acremonium strictum*, when single spore isolates were obtained through dilution

plating. This finding substantiates the fears raised by Hawksworth [5] that many authors of papers do not have the identity of their cultures checked by specialists nor care to deposit a subculture with a national collection centre either for their future use or for other workers.

References

- [1] Ghosh, M., Das, A., Mishra, A.K. and Nanda, G. (1993) Enzyme Microb. Technol. 15, 703–709.
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- [3] Ghosh, M. and Nanda, G. (1994) Appl. Environ. Microbiol. 60, 4620–4623.
- [4] Smith, D. and Onions, A.H.S. (1983) The Preservation and Maintenance of Living Fungi. CAB International Mycological Institute, UK.
- [5] Hawksworth, D.L. (1984) Nature 310, 18.

We have received from Dr. G. Nanda no answer to the above.

The Editor

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