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IV. 研究成果の刊行物・別刷

# **Short Communication**

# Bathwater-Associated Cases of Legionellosis in Japan, with a Special Focus on Legionella Concentrations in Water

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SUMMARY: To evaluate the relationship between the incidence of legionellosis and *Legionella* concentrations in bathwater, we sent a questionnaire to 76 prefectural and municipal public health laboratories in Japan and found that 35 had encountered cases of legionellosis and had implemented investigations to determine the sources of the infections. Based on the results of the questionnaire, we were able to analyze various characteristics of the patients, of the facilities that were thought to be associated with the cases, and of the species and serogroups of the isolates and concentrations of *Legionella*. Ninety-six cases were included in this study. The median age was 67 years (range, 13-89 years). The most prevalent underlying medical condition among patients was diabetes, and the second most prevalent was high blood pressure. Concentrations of *Legionella* in bathwater ranged from 10 to 160,000 CFU/100 ml. Ten episodes were selected in which causative strains were found in the suspected source environment, and were then confirmed by pulsed-field gel electrophoresis analysis, enabling us to provide an estimated infectious concentration range of *Legionella* of 90 to 140,000 CFU/100 ml. It was thus suggested that the current Japanese regulatory safety level for *Legionella* in bathwater, which is set below the detection limit of culture techniques (10 CFU/100 ml), should be appropriate to prevent bathwater-associated legionellosis. In tandem with the above-mentioned research, a review of literature concerning bathwater-associated legionellosis and typical cases was undertaken.

Legionellae are the aetiologic agents of legionellosis caused by the inhalation of aerosols or the microaspiration of water contaminated with the bacteria, and they are ubiquitous in not only natural but also man-made water systems, such as cooling towers, spas, artificial fountains, and drinking water supply systems (1). Legionellosis has been classified as one of the Category IV notifiable infectious diseases in the Law Concerning the Prevention of Infectious Diseases and Medical Care for Patients of Infections (the Infectious Diseases Control Law) in Japan. Since the Infectious Diseases Control Law was enacted in April of 1999, the number of reported legionellosis cases in Japan each year has steadily increased from 56 (in 1999) to 668 (in 2007). Many of the cases of legionellosis in which an infection source was established have been associated with bathing facilities in Japan, suggesting that the infection occurs via the inhalation of aerosols proceeding from bathwater (2-4).

The risk of infection apparently depends on many complex factors, among which are: the susceptibility of patients to illness in general; water-system configurations; disinfection methods; the concentration and virulence of the bacteria in the water; the number and size of the sloughed off pieces of biofilm containing the bacteria that are suspended in the water; and the frequency of diagnostic testing for legionellosis among patients (5). Among these factors, the concentration of the bacteria in the water is certainly one of the most critical influences upon community-acquired legionellosis, as, in large outbreaks of bathwater-associated legionellosis in Japan, high

concentrations of the bacteria in bathwater have been reported (3,6-8). However, there is no established dose–response relationship for *Legionella* infections, and the concentration of legionellae necessary to cause an outbreak is unknown (9).

In this study, data on patients and environmental investigations from 76 prefectural and municipal public health laboratories in Japan and generated between October of 2001 and June of 2007 were collected via a questionnaire. All of these cases were either thought or proven to be bathwaterassociated legionellosis. With reference to the guidelines for surveillance, several of the data acquired from questionnaires were confirmed by the National Epidemiological Surveillance of Infectious Diseases. The information collected included the age and gender of the patients; date of onset; latent period; symptoms; underlying medical conditions; testing methods for diagnosis; species and serogroups of Legionella from patient and suspected source environment; suspected source facilities; concentrations of Legionella in suspected source environment; chlorination of bathwater; suspected routes of infection; and results of pulsed-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE) analysis for the Legionella isolates.

Thirty-five public health laboratories investigated 92 sporadic and 4 outbreak cases of legionellosis to determine the sources and routes of infection. The median age of the cases was 67 (age range of 13-89 years; mean of 64.8), with 84 males (88.4%) and 11 females (11.6%). The gender of one patient could not be confirmed. Among the 96 patients analyzed, 88 (91.7%) patients were older than 49 years. The most prevalent age group, which included 39 patients, was the group containing patients aged 60 to 69 years (40.6%).

Eighty of the 96 patients had pneumonia. The remaining 11 patients suffered from symptoms including fever, dyspnea, cough, fatigue, and diarrhea. One patient was diagnosed with Pontiac fever. Information about four patients' symptoms

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could not be obtained. The latent period ranged between 1 and 16 days, with an average of 6.2 days. Underlying medical conditions included diabetes (14.6%), high blood pressure (5.2%), hyperlipidemia (3.2%), and others (24.0%). Fifty patients (52.1%) were reported not to have underlying medical conditions.

The testing methods for diagnosis are shown in Table 1. Eighty-two patients (85.4%) in total were diagnosed as having legionellosis through urinary antigen detection. Twenty-five Legionella pneumophila strains were isolated from 24 patients (25.0%). Serogroups included L. pneumophila serogroup 1 (SG1) (68.0%), SG2 (12.0%), SG3 (8.0%), SG6 (8.0%), and SG4 (4.0%).

Facilities that were suspected to be associated with legionellosis included public baths (41.7%), inns (13.5%), hotels (12.5%), sports facilities (6.3%), nursing homes (4.2%), and other facilities (14.6%). Four patients (4.2%) were reported to have been infected residentially. Two hundred thirty-nine *Legionella* strains were isolated from the suspected environmental sources of infection in 69 cases. The most prevalent serogroup was *L. pneumophila* SG1 (26.8%), followed by SG6 (19.7%), 5 (9.2%), and 3 (8.8%). The concentrations of *Legionella* ranged from 10 to 160,000 CFU/100

Table 1. Testing methods used for 96 cases of legionellosis

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Method	No. of cases (%)
Urinary antigen detection	63 (65.6)
Isolation of Legionella	6 (6.3)
IFA for serum	4 (4.2)
Urinary antigen detection and isolation of Legionella	11 (11.5)
Urinary antigen detection and PCR assay	2 (2.1)
Urinary antigen detection, isolation of Legionella and PCR assay	4 (4.2)
Urinary antigen detection, isolation of Legionella and IFA for serum	1 (1.0)
Urinary antigen detection, and IFA for serum	1 (1.0)
Isolation of Legionella and PCR assay	2 (2.1)
Not specified	2 (2.1)
Total	96 (100)

IFA, immunofluorescent antibody.

ml.

Among 18 episodes (20 cases) in which *Legionella* strains were isolated from both the patient and the environment, and the concentration of *Legionella* organisms was determined, the PFGE patterns of the strains were indistinguishable from each other in 10 episodes (12 cases). For these episodes, the PFGE results provided the evidence of the source of infection, and estimated concentrations of *Legionella* in the source of infection ranged from 90 to 140,000 CFU/100 ml (Table 2).

Table 2 shows that all patients except one were males older than 50 years. Seven out of 12 patients had one or more underlying medical conditions. A circulating bathwater system was used in 8 of 10 episodes, and chlorination of bathwater was insisted in 8 episodes but residual chlorine concentrations were less than 0.2 ppm at sampling time. Two patients suffering from an outbreak of episode no. 10 might have been infected with *Legionella* by the inhalation of aerosol from a whirlpool spa, even though the concentration of *Legionella* in the water was quite low. A patient of episode no. 7 was infected with *Legionella* by aspiration.

A number of case reports indicate that hot tubs in public bath facilities and accommodations are the most common source of legionellosis in Japan (2-4,6,10-12). According to a review of related studies, the bacterial concentrations found in such sources can range from 520,000 to less than 10 CFU/ 100 ml (Table 3). The aspiration of bathwater and the use of corticosteroids both appear to increase the risk of legionellosis, even with relatively low concentrations of Legionella in bathwater, such as those under 300 CFU/100 ml. Another noteworthy point in that regard is that even a very low concentration (3 CFU/100 ml) was sufficient to cause Legionnaires' disease in a near-drowning case. In #4, 3 out of 1,833 cruise ship passengers in total were reported to have contracted Legionnaires' disease after using the cruise ship hot tubs, which, though they lacked the potentially problematic air induction bubble systems and hydrotherapy jet circulation, nonetheless were shown upon testing to have concentrations of 15,000 CFU/100 ml of Legionella (December 23, 2002) (10). In four large outbreaks (#1, #2, #3, and #6, Table 3) associated with hot tubs which did have air induction bubble systems, and/or hydrotherapy jet circulation, and/or hot water-falls, the source of the water being circulating bathwater,

Table 2. Epidemiological features of legionellosis cases in which clinical and epidemiologically linked environmental isolates were indistinguishable by PFGE

Episode no.	Concentration of Legionella (CFU/100 ml)	Legionella isolate	Facilities	Age of patient <sup>1)</sup>	Underlying medical condition
1	140,000	L. pneumophila SG3	home	46	healthy
22)	29,000	L. pneumophila SG1	hotel	69	unknown
				68	unknown
3	4,700	L. pneumophila SG1	hotel	60	unknown
4	3,000	L. pneumophila SG1	public bath	68	diabetes
5	1,400	L. pneumophila SG1	nursing home	81	diabetes, cerebral infarction
6	890	L. pneumophila SG2	public bath	53	reduced renal and hepatic function
7	260	L. pneumophila SG3	public bath	68	healthy (near drowning)
8	160	L. pneumophila SG1	public bath	58	diabetes, heavy drinker and smoker
9	110	L. pneumophila SG1	public bath	70	unknown
$10^{3}$	90	L. pneumophila SG1	sports facilities	70	diabetes, gastric ulcer, atrial fibrillation
				58	diabetes, hypertension, arrhythmia

<sup>1):</sup> All patients were male and contracted pneumonia.

<sup>2).</sup> Two patients were reported to have contracted Legionnaires' disease after bathing on the same day in a hotel.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3)</sup>: Two patients were infected at the same facilities and presented respiratory symptoms in a period of 15 days one after the other. SG: serogroup.

Table 3. Clinical and epidemiolofical characteristic of legionellosis cases associated with bathwater: a literature review

Episode no.	Concentration of Legionella (CFU/100 ml)	Legionella spp.	Facility	Confirmed case (Fatal case)	Age (y)	Gender (% male)	Underlying medical condition	Reference no.
1	520,000	L. pneumophila SG1, L. dumoffii	public bath	46 (7)	mean 63.3 (26-95)	33 males (71.7%)	hypertension, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, renal disease, chronic respiratory disease, smalignancy; smoking (76 subjects)	6, 13, 14
2	130,000	L. pneumophila SG1	public bath	9 (1)	mean 64.9 (52-82)	male	not reported	7
3	88,000	L. pneumophila SG1	public bath	23 (2)	mean 67.0 (50-86)	21 males (91.3%)	hypertension, hyperlipemia, diabetes, emphysema, gastric ulcer; smoking (22 subjects)	8, 15
4	15,000	L. pneumophila SGs1 & 5	cruise ship	3 (0)	70, 71, 73	2 males (66.7%)	emphysema, hypertension, atrial fibrillation, abnormal glucose tolerance; smoking	10, 16, 17, 18
5	14,640	L. pneumophila SG6	home	1 (1)	8 days	female	neonate after waterbirth	2
6	8,420	L. pneumophila SG1	public bath	27 (3)	mean 62.8 (27-85)	18 males (66.7%)	hypertension, diabetes, chronic hepatitis (HCV carrier); smoking (20 subjects)	3, 19
7	4,500	L. pneumophila SG1	public bath	2 (0)	70, 76	male	not reported	12
8	4,480	not reported	home	1 (0)	56	female	diabetes, diabetic nephropathy	20
9	300	L. pneumophila SG6	hotel	1 (0)	59	male	submerging his entire head and face	21
10	<10-70	L. pneumophila SG10	hospital	1 (1)	72	female	idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis; treated with methylprednisolone	4
11	3	L. pneumophila SG3	Japanese inn	1 (0)	71	female	chronic pancreatitis, old tuberculosis; near-drowning	22, 23

All episodes except for #11 were associated with hot tubs (with circulating bathwater system). Detailed information on the hot spring (#11 case) was not available.

Molecular typing of clinical and epidemiologically linked environmental Legionella isolates was performed by PFGE (#1, #3, #4, #6, #9-#11). In episode #1, a high concentration of L. londiniensis (1,500,000 CFU/100 ml) was detected in a bathwater sample, but this is omitted from this table since neither increase in serum titier against nor isolation of L. londiniensis were observed among patients.

Legionella water concentrations approached and exceeded 10,000 CFU/100 ml. This would seem to suggest that, in the case of the discovery of such a high concentration in a public facility, local public authorities should announce the name and location of the bathing facilities promptly and make all feasible efforts to locate epidemiologically linked cases among area patients presenting with respiratory symptoms. Means  $\pm$  SE of the attack rates of legionellosis in these outbreaks were 0.13  $\pm$  0.15% (a confirmed case number divided by total visitor days) (#1, #2, #3, and #6, Table 3) and 3.4  $\pm$  1.7% (a compensated case number divided by total visitor days) (#1, #2, and #6, Table 3).

The present study has expanded upon the previous data on concentrations of Legionella in bathwater as a source of infection, especially in concentrations ranging from 90 to 3,000 CFU/100 ml. There were 10 episodes within our study in which the PFGE patterns of Legionella strains from the source of infection and from the patients were indistinguishable, and the concentrations of Legionella associated with these 10 episodes ranged from 90 to 140,000 CFU/100 ml (Table 2). Eight of the 10 episodes were linked to a self-contained body of water that was filtered and 'chemically disinfected' (a hot tub) (24). Hot tubs are designed for sitting or lying in up to the neck, not for swimming, and are not drained, cleaned, and refilled after each user. In Japan, however, the temperature of the water in hot tubs usually ranges from 40°C to 43°C, which is higher than in Europe (30°C to 40°C). A noteworthy finding was that even a low concentration of Legionella (90 CFU/100 mL) could be linked to the development of legionellosis in a situation of increased aerosol formation.

Advanced age, the state of being male, and other similarly regrettable chronic medical disorders such as end-stage renal disease, cancer, and diabetes are known risk factors for legionellosis (25). Among the 96 patients in the study, 21 were reported to have some kind of underlying medical conditions. The most frequent underlying medical condition was diabetes, and this was followed by high blood pressure. The role of high blood pressure as a risk factor is not clear. Only two patients were reported to be heavy smokers. The habit of smoking, by the way, should be reported in epidemiological investigations along with other underlying medical data, because cigarette smoking is one of the risk factors for legionellosis (26). In a national surveillance report (January 2003 to September 2008; 2,460 cases), the mean age of legionellosis patients in Japan was 65.2 years, and the percentage of males was 83% (27). These trends-the risk of age and gender-were borne out by the findings in the present study as well. The mean age of the patients in the present study was 64.8 years and the percentage of male patients was 88.4%.

Molecular typing and comparison of clinical isolates and suspected environmental source isolates of *Legionella* promotes the identification of sources of the disease and the subsequent prevention of further cases. Among such methods, PFGE analysis is considered to be one of the most discriminative epidemiological methods for subtyping *L. pneumophila* strains (28). Selected cases listed in Table 2 confirm that the culturing of clinical and environmental samples and the sub-

sequent PFGE analysis are mandatory methods for determining the sources of infection and the concentrations of *Legionella* in an environment. Urinary antigen detection is a rapid and easy test and can detect most cases of legionellosis caused by *L. pneumophila* SG1 (Table 1). However, clinical specimens for *Legionella* isolation should always be cultured.

A WHO comprehensive overview of Legionella states that legionellae are not distributed normally within the aquatic environment, and that even when high concentrations of the bacteria are detected, the WHO says that this may not be related to health risk (9), citing work by Kool et al. (5) and Bentham (29). First, using multivariate Poisson regression analysis, the number of nosocomial Legionnaires' disease cases in each hospital is reported to correlate better with the proportion of water-system sites that tested positive for Legionella than with the concentration of Legionella bacteria in water samples (5). However, it should be kept in mind that this counterintuitive result would not necessarily be applied to cases of community-acquired infection, since the rate of healthy people in communities is expected to be higher than in hospitals and healthy people are generally more resistant to opportunistic pathogens like legionellae. Second, during the monitoring of cooling tower water, culture results from Legionella samples taken from the same systems 2 weeks apart were not statistically related, suggesting that determinations of health risks from cooling tower water cannot be reliably based upon single or infrequent Legionella tests (29). Legionella concentrations in bathwater can be influenced by operating conditions, numbers of users, and concentrations of disinfectants. One problem when trying to verify an infection source is whether the bacterial concentration when sampled is approximately the same as the concentration during the time of infection. The facilities suspected as the source of infection should be kept as they are (without urgent disinfection), and the relevant bathwater should be investigated as soon as possible by local health authorities. These limitations and caveats notwithstanding, facilities with very high colony counts probably are substantially more likely to be the source of an outbreak than those with lower counts (30) (Table 3). In conclusion, our retrospective findings suggest that the current Japanese regulatory safety level for Legionella in bathwater, which is set below the detection limit of culture techniques (10 CFU/100 ml), is appropriate to prevent bathwater-associated legionellosis.

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#### 〈原 著〉

# 分離集落の特徴を利用したレジオネラ属菌分別法の有用性

# 森本 洋

# Usefulness of Selection of Legionella by Colony Appearance

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#### 要 旨

レジオネラ属菌の培養検査を行う場合、検査対象試料によっては、さまざまな雑菌が混在しているため、酸、熱による前処理や選択分離培地の使用が必要となる。しかしながら、これら前処理や選択分離培地を使用しても、それら雑菌の発育を抑制できない場合が往々にしてある。多くのレジオネラ属菌検査マニュアルには、「レジオネラ属菌分離集落の特徴として、大小不同の灰白色湿潤集落で特有の淡い酸臭がある」と記載されているが、実際の検査においては、このような集落が多数存在し、雑菌との分別が困難な場合が多い。そこで本研究では、より正確で簡便な集落観察方法を検討したので報告する。

分離培地上の発育集落に斜光を当て、実体顕微鏡で観察すると、レジオネラ属菌は、特徴的な外観構造(カットグラス様、モザイク様)を呈した。この観察法を用いると、レジオネラ属菌と雑菌を効率良く分別、釣菌することができ、菌数測定も簡便に、極めて正確に行えることが明らかとなった。

本研究では、環境試料から L. pneumophila の 13 血清群およびその他 17 種類のレジオネラ属菌が、この観察法で効率良く検出された。また、レジオネラ肺炎の患者から最も高率に検出されている L. pneumophila 血清群 1 においても、この特徴が観察されたことから、本観察法は、定期的な環境水の自主検査および感染源や汚染源を調査するにあたり有効な検査法の一つであると思われた。

Key words:レジオネラ集落、斜光、カットグラス様、モザイク様

#### はじめに

レジオネラ症の感染源・感染経路は、レジオネラ属菌が生息する土壌の砂塵や、それらが混入し本菌が増殖した温泉などの浴槽水およびビルの冷却塔水など人工環境水からのエアロゾルの吸入が挙げられている。そのため、これらの環境試料が検査対象となる場合が多い。分離培地上では、特有の淡い酸臭のある灰(青)白色湿潤集落を釣菌することとなっている(以下従来法)1~6. しかしながら本検査では、分離培地上に、前述のような特徴の集落が、レジオネラ属菌、非レジオネラ属菌を問わず多数存在していることが多い。その結果、分離培地上で

の分別が難しいため、確認には多数のレジオネラ属菌様 集落を釣菌して、同定しなければならない.

1981 年に竹田らは、当時確認されていたレジオネラ 症菌血清型  $1\sim3$  は、分離培地上の集落に斜光を当てる と、その外観がカットグラス様の構造を呈すると紹介している $^{7)}$ . Manual of CLINICAL MICROBIOLOGY $^{8,9)}$  においても、レジオネラ属菌集落に対し同様の記載がなされている.

そこで我々は、現在一般的に行われているレジオネラ 属菌検査法の中に、この形態的特徴を利用する方法を取 り入れることで、効率的にレジオネラ属菌の確認、釣菌 および菌数の測定などができるかを検討し、その有用性 を明らかにしたので報告する.

北海道立衛生研究所感染症センター微生物部食品微生物科

#### 材料と方法

# 1. 基準株による確認

#### 1) 供試菌株

5 種類の GIFU strain (Legionella pneumophila GTC 296 (ATCC 33152), GTC 297 (ATCC 33216), L. micdadei GTC 299 (ATCC 33218), L. oakrigensis GTC 319 (ATCC 33761), L. spiritensis GTC 401 (ATCC 35249)) を供試菌株とした.

#### 2) 使用分離培地

現在広く普及している市販分離生培地である,6社(栄研化学㈱,極東製薬工業㈱,日研生物医学研究所,OXOID,BIOMÉRIEUX)のBCYEα寒天生培地,5社(極東製薬工業㈱,日研生物医学研究所,OXOID,BIOMÉRIEUX,MERCK)のGVPC寒天生培地,栄研化学㈱のWYOα寒天生培地,OXOID社のMWY寒天生培地を使用した。また,OXOID社の製品については他に,レジオネラCYE寒天基礎培地にサプリメントを指示通り溶解,添加し調製(以下自家調製)したBCYEα,BMPAα,MWY寒天培地も使用した。

#### 3) 分離集落の観察

5 種類の供試菌株を、各分離培地に画線塗抹し、37℃で培養した。培養後の各分離集落の観察は、実体顕微鏡(ニコン SMZ-10, SMZ-1000)で行った。暗室中に実体顕微鏡を設置し、分離培地を顕微鏡のステージに載せ、光源(ニコンまたはオリンパス製コールドライト)を設置し、分離培地に斜光を当てることによって分離集落の観察を行った(以下斜光法)。装置の構成を図1に示した。観察は10日間、毎日行った。

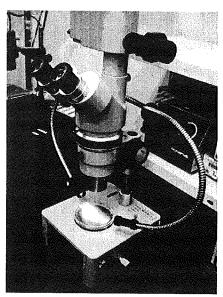


図1 分離培地上の集落観察(斜光法:暗所で行う)

# 2. 環境試料に対する検討

### 1) 対象試料

浴槽水 764 試料, 冷却塔水 17 試料, 腐葉土 2 試料の計 783 試料に対し, レジオネラ属菌検査を行った.

#### 2) 検査法

浴槽水および冷却塔水は、非濃縮試料と 100 倍濃縮 試料に分けた.試料の濃縮は,ろ過濃縮法で行った.ろ 過濃縮法は,以下のとおりである.試料 500 mL を,直 径 47 mm, 孔径 0.2 μm のポリカーボネート製メンブラ ンフィルター(ADVANTEC)を使用したろ液受フラスコ 付きポリサルフォン製のろ過器(NALGENE)で吸引ろ 過した.ろ過終了後,メンプランフィルターを 50 mL の滅菌遠心管中で5 mL のろ液にひたし、10 分間手で 強く振り洗浄した. この洗浄液を 100 倍濃縮試料とし た. 非濃縮およびろ過濃縮法にて調製した接種試料は, それぞれ1mLを熱処理区、酸処理区に使用した. 熱処 理区は,接種試料を50℃,20分間処理してから100 µL を,酸処理区は 0.2M HCl·KCl buffer(pH2.2)を等量 加え、室温にて4分間放置してから200 μL を、さら に、未処理区として接種試料 100 µL を、それぞれ自家 調製した MWY 寒天培地(OXOID)に滅菌コンラージ棒 で塗布した. それらを 37℃ で 10 日間培養した. 培養 期間中は、毎日分離培地を斜光法で観察し、発育集落に おいて、レジオネラ属菌と他の細菌との分別が可能か検 討を行った、斜光法および従来法によって、レジオネラ 様集落と判断した集落を釣菌し, 区画した自家調製の BCYEα 寒天培地(OXOID)と血液寒天培地に画線培養 した. 培養後、BCYEα 寒天培地にのみ発育したものを レジオネラ属菌と推定した. レジオネラ属菌の同定は, PCR 法<sup>10,11)</sup>,レジオネラ免疫血清「生研」,レジオネラ ラテックステスト(OXOID), DDH レジオネラ(極東)に よる DNA-DNA ハイブリダイゼーション, 16S rRNA 遺伝子の塩基配列の確認12)により行った.

腐葉土は、微生物検査必携 細菌・真菌検査<sup>[3]</sup>に従って希釈液を調製した。前処理として、レジオネラの発育に影響を及ぼす雑菌が相当量含まれていることを想定し、50℃ 20 分の加熱後、酸処理(0.2M HCl·KCl buffer pH2.2 を等量加え室温で 4~30 分間放置)したものを接種試料とした。分離培養は前述の環境水の培養に準じて行った。

## 結 果

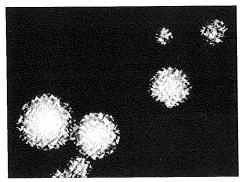
# 1. 基準株による確認

斜光法による観察の結果,5種類のレジオネラ基準株の集落は,今回使用したすべてのレジオネラ用分離培地上で,カットグラス様(モザイク様),または集落の辺縁部がカットグラス様で中心部が綿様といった特徴的な外観構造を呈した(図2).このことは,斜光法によって観

察されるレジオネラ分離集落の形態的特徴が、通常の検査において有効利用できる可能性を示唆するものであった。また、分離培地の違い(種類、メーカー)、菌株の違いにより、見え方が異なる場合があった。集落出現後、3日目以降は、培養時間の経過とともに、この形態的特徴が確認しづらくなる場合があった(図3).

# 2. 環境試料に対する検討

斜光法を利用したレジオネラ属菌検査結果と釣菌した 集落の最終同定結果を表 1,2に示した.環境試料で は,特に,培養 3 日目以降に発育が認められた集落に おいて,基準株と同様の特徴的な形態を示したものが多 数認められた.全 783 試料中,718 試料(浴槽水 701 試 料,冷却塔水 15 試料,腐棄土 2 試料)で特徴的な形態



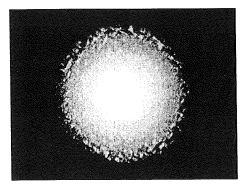


図 2 実体顕微鏡下のレジオネラ属菌集落 1 (左)L. pneumophila GTC 296 (ATCC 33152), 発育初日(撮影倍率×120) (右)L. pneumophila GTC 296 (ATCC 33152), 発育 2 日目(撮影倍率×124) (BCYEα生培地: OXOID)

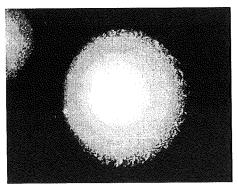
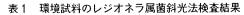


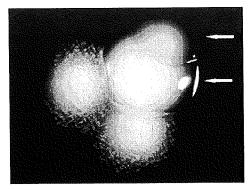
図3 実体顕微鏡下のレジオネラ属菌集落 2 L. pneumophila GTC 296 (ATCC 33152) の発育 3 日目以降,成長とともに模様が淡くなった集落 (BCYEα生培地:OXOID,撮影倍率×124)



	検査試料数	レジオネラ検出数 (複数種類検出数)
斜光法 +	718	703 (611)
斜光法 -	65	0( 0)
āt	783	703 (611)

表 2 灰白色湿潤集落の同定結果

		確認集落数	レジオネラ 集落数	非レジオネラ 集落数
斜光法	+	10,620	10,199	421
斜光法		5,747	0	5,747
計		16,367	10,199	6,168



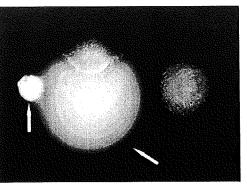
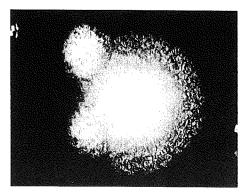


図4 実体顕微鏡下のレジオネラ属菌集落と非レジオネラ属菌集落(矢印)

(右)レジオネラ属菌の 3/4 以上が非レジオネラ属菌に覆われている(温泉水培養 4 日目, 自家調製 MWY 培地: OXOID, 撮影 倍率×80)



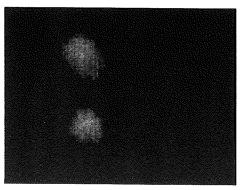
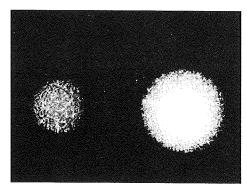


図5 実体顕微鏡下のレジオネラ属菌集落3

(左) L. cherrii (辺縁オレンジ) と L. pneumophila 血清群 1 (辺縁ピンク) (右)同上集落に 360 nm の長波長紫外線を当て、自発蛍光を示す L. cherrii (温泉水培養 4 日目、自家調製 MWY 培地: OXOID、撮影倍率×120)



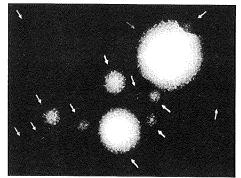


図6 実体顕微鏡下のレジオネラ属菌集落4

(左)L. geestiana: 左とL. pneumophila 血清群 6:右 (撮影倍率×120)

(右)L. pneumophila 血清群 4:矢印ピンク, L. rubrilucens: 黄緑, L. pneumophila 血清群不明:白, L. pneumophila 血清群 1: 赤, L. pneumophila 血清群 5: 水色, L. feeleii:黄色 (撮影倍率×80)(温泉水培養 4 日目, 自家調製 MWY 培地:OXOID)

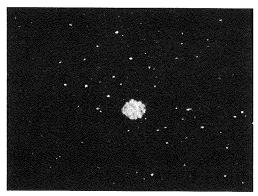


図7 実体顕微鏡下のレジオネラ属菌集落 5 温泉水培養 30~35 時間で発育した *L. pneumophila* 血清群 6 (自家調製 MWY 培地: OXOID, 撮影倍率×204)

を示した集落が認められた。これら集落のうち、釣菌した 10,620 集落について確認検査を行った結果、10,199 集落がレジオネラ属菌と同定された(96%)。これにより、718 試料中 703 試料(浴槽水 686 試料、冷却塔水 15 試料、腐葉土 2 試料)で、レジオネラ属菌が確認された。なお、全 783 試料において、斜光法でカットグラス様等の形態的特徴のない灰白色湿潤集落 5,747 集落に

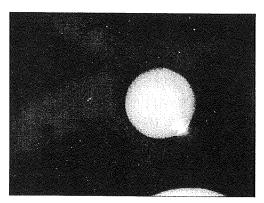


図8 実体顕微鏡下のレジオネラ属菌集落6 発育当初から不明瞭な模様を呈した L. micdadei (温泉水培養4日目,自家調製 MWY 培地:OXOID,撮影倍率× 120)

ついても確認検査を行った結果、それらはすべて非レジオネラ属菌であった(図4).このことは、培養期間中、斜光法により本特徴を有する集落が認められなかった試料(65 試料)からは、レジオネラ属菌が確認されなかったことも意味する。また、一つの環境試料から、菌種の異なる複数のレジオネラ属菌が検出された事例が、陽性

703 試料中 611 試料(浴槽水 594 試料,冷却塔水 15 試料,腐棄土 2 試料:87%)あった.これらの試料では,分離培地上に発育した集落を斜光法で観察すると,色,大きさ,外観構造などで見え方に違いがある場合が多数認められた.この形態的特徴の異なる集落を釣菌して確認検査を行うと,種類の異なるレジオネラ属菌であることが多かった(図 5,6).さらに,斜光法では,実体顕微鏡を使用するため,培養 2 日目(30~35 時間程度)で培地上に発育してきた極めて微小なレジオネラ属菌集落を確認できる場合もあった(図 7).また,真菌類や雑菌が多数発育した分離培地上で,わずかな隙間に発育したレジオネラ属菌も確認することができた.

なお、今回の試験において、斜光法により確認された レジオネラ属菌の種類は、L. pneumophila (血清群 1~ 10, 12, 13, 15, 不明)、L. anisa, L. birminghamensis, L. bozemanii, L. cherrii, L. dumoffii, L. erythra, L. feeleii, L. geestiana, L. gormanii, L. jamestowniensis, L. londiniensis, L. maceachernii, L. micdadei, L. oakridgensis, L. rubrilucens, L. sainthelensi, L. spiritensis であった.

#### 考 察

本研究で、斜光法を利用したレジオネラ属菌検査を行 った結果,5種類の基準株,環境試料から分離されたL. pneumophila の 13 血清群およびその他 17 種類のレジオ ネラ属菌が、カットグラス様などの特徴的な外観構造を 有していた. 今回, 環境試料を検査した結果, 本特徴を 有していた灰白色湿潤集落の96%がレジオネラ属菌で あったこと, 本特徴を有していない灰白色湿潤集落は, 全て非レジオネラ属菌であったことから、本観察法は、 分離培地上で、レジオネラ属菌の分別を行う上で極めて 有用な方法であると思われた. 従来法では、肉眼で観察 し、灰白色を呈する湿潤集落をレジオネラ属菌様集落と 推定し、菌数測定や釣菌を行ってきた。しかしながら、 この方法では、他の発育菌との分別が困難であり、不確 かな菌数測定や非効率的な釣菌作業を行わなければなら ない場合が多い. 今回, 斜光法の導入により, レジオネ ラ属菌集落の有する形態的特徴を利用することで, 多数 の灰白色湿潤集落を含む集落が分離培地上に発育してい たとしても、レジオネラ属菌の存否を高い確率で確認す ることができることが判明した。それにより、他の菌の 発育の多少にかかわらず、釣菌対象となる集落が限定さ れ、その後のレジオネラ属菌の確認検査を効率良く行う ことができ、菌数測定も極めて正確に行うことができる と思われた.

レジオネラ属菌は、他の細菌に比べ増殖速度が遅く、7もしくは10日目まで培養するとされている<sup>1~6)</sup>. 我々も、これまでに分離培地上で発育が確認されてから数日間にわたり、レジオネラ属菌集落の増加が認められる

事例をしばしば経験している. また, 種類によっては発 育が確認されるまでに、7日間以上の培養日数を要し、 その後最終確認に至るまでに、さらに数日間の培養が必 要だった事例も何度か経験している. 文献によっては, 培養 24~48 時間後に出現した集落はレジオネラ属菌で はなく、独立集落は4~5日目から出現しはじめ、6~7 日前後で集落性状が判定できるまでに生育すると記載さ れている1,2). しかしながら、斜光法では、実体顕微鏡 を利用することから、培養2日目(30~35時間程度)か ら特徴的な微小集落を確認できる場合があった. 発育早 期から高い確率でレジオネラ属菌の存在が確認できるこ とは、定性的な判定日数を短縮できる可能性がある。ま た, 環境試料では, 分離培地に真菌類が発育する場合が あり,一般的に数日間の培養日数が必要ということは, 培養早期に発育しているそれら真菌類や雑菌の集落の成 長に伴い、レジオネラ属菌の発育可能エリアが極めて限 定されていく、状況によっては、わずかな隙間に発育し たレジオネラの微小集落が、検査者がそれと気づく前 に, 真菌類や雑菌の集落で覆われる可能性があり, 検査 に大きく影響を与えていることも考えられる. しかしな がら、本法では、より培養日数を要するレジオネラ属菌 に対しても, そのような影響を最小限に抑えることがで きる可能性があり、この点からも有用な方法であると思 われた.

今回,一つの環境試料から,菌種の異なる複数のレジオネラ属菌が検出された事例が,陽性 703 試料中 611 試料(87%)あった.これらの事例では,一つの分離培地上から複数種類のレジオネラ属菌が発育した場合がほとんどであった.従来法では,これらを分別することが非常に困難であるが,斜光法により,色,大きさ,外観構造などの見え方の違う集落を釣菌すること,さらに集落の発育時期等を考慮することにより,異なる種類を効率的に釣菌する事が可能な場合があると思われた.このことから,環境水の詳細な実態調査や患者発生時の詳細な感染源調査などを行う時にも,有効な検査法の一つであると思われた.ただし,特徴の違いで種類を特定することは難しく,菌種を特定する検査は必須である.

現在レジオネラ属菌は 50 を超える菌種が報告されており、中にはいくつかの血清群に分けられる種類もある. よって、それらすべてにおいてこのような形態的特徴が認められるのかは、今後確認してみなければわからないが、本研究において 5 種類の基準株、環境試料から分離された L. pneumophila の 13 血清群およびその他17 種類のレジオネラ属菌で、カットグラス様等の特徴的な外観構造を有していることが確認され、効率良く検出されたこと、またレジオネラ肺炎の患者から最も高率に検出されている L. pneumophila 血清群 1 において、この形態的特徴が観察されたことからも、本法は、定期

的な環境水の自主検査および感染源や汚染源を調査するにあたり有効な検査法の一つであると思われた.

一方で、斜光法においても、本形態的特徴が不明瞭なレジオネラ属菌集落も経験した(図8). 分離培地の違い(種類、メーカー)、菌株の違いなどにより、このような見え方をする場合があると思われる. 十分な観察により、判定することは可能であるが、鏡検と判定に慣れること、疑わしい場合は必ず釣菌し確認する事が必要である. また、斜光法単独での確定は誤判定につながる可能性もあるので、注意が必要である. さらに、レジオネラ属菌集落が分離培地に発育してから3日目以降は、培養時間の経過とともに、この形態的特徴が確認しづらくなる場合があるので、注意が必要である.

以上のことから、特に定性検査においては、これまでの培養法に斜光法を導入することで、正確性の向上と迅速化が可能となり、患者由来試料にも応用できると考える。また、環境水などの検査では、定性的な考えと、十分な培養日数を考慮した定量的な菌数測定の結果の位置付けを明確にすることにより、正確で迅速な対応へ結びつけることができると思われた。斜光法には実体顕微鏡は必須であるが、光源について、固定式のコールドライト以外での検討を行った結果、安価で比較的スポットライト様に使用できるペン型の高光度 LED ライト(口径7~10 mm)でも、簡易的に確認することができた。

本斜光法は、観察場所と明所、暗所等の条件、使用培地、実体顕微鏡、斜光ライトなどについて、自施設の状況を十分に把握し、事前にレジオネラ属菌の集落形態を確認した上で、従来の培養法に組み込むことにより、効率的な検査結果が得られる方法と思われた.

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# Usefulness of Selection of Legionella by Colony Appearance

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#### Abstract

An acid or heat preprocessing step or a selective isolation agar is required for the Legionella culture test, since the test sample may contain various other bacteria. However, miscellaneous bacterial growth is sometimes not possible to control even with such precautions. Many Legionella-test manuals indicate that isolated Legionella colonies are characterized by different-sized grayish-white moist look with the slight acidic odor peculiar to Legionella. However, in the actual test, Legionella colonies are often difficult to distinguish from other bacteria in presence of many similar-looking colonies. Therefore, we suggest a colony-observation method which is more precise and simple. The characteristic outward structures (cut-glass like or mosaic like appearance) of Legionella spp. were observed under a stereo microscope with oblique illumination over the growing culture on the isolation agar. Legionella spp. could be distinguished from other bacteria and efficiently obtained using this observational method. In addition, bacteria count was easy and extremely accurate with this method. In this study, 13 serogroups of L. pneumophila and 17 types of other Legionella spp. were detected efficiently by this method from environmental samples. Since the same features were observed in the L. pneumophila serogroup 1, which was detected most frequently in Legionella pneumonia patients, this observational method is one of the most effective test methods for regular monitoring of environmental water or investigations of infection or contamination sources.

Key words: Legionella colonies, oblique illumination, cut-glass like, mosaic-like

