Reply

A.

Kint

Department of Dermatology, Akademisch Ziekenhuis, Gent, Belgium

Prof. A. Kint, Department of Dermatology, Akademisch Ziekenhuis, De Pintelaan 135, B-9000 Gent (Belgium)

(In Consultation with Prof. Ch. De Vroey)

The use of contact plates (Rodac) for the direct, quantitative isolation of the commensal lipophilic yeast *Pityrosporum ovale* from the human skin was introduced by Verman-der and De Vroey in 1985 [1]. This reproducible procedure has recently been adopted by Faergemann [2], the leading Swedish authority in the field of *Pityrosporum* research: contact plates containing the culture medium recommended by Faergemann are now commercially available. For several years we have been using Dixon's medium (also known as Van Abbe's medium, who used it for the isolation of *P. ovale* from patients with dandruff [3]).

We learned about the efficacy of this medium from several reports of G. Midgley, a British authority in the same field. For the isolation, incubation at 37 °C is preferred to 25-28 °C, used for other pathogenic yeasts, and growth (number of colony-forming units) can be recorded within a week, i.e. after 5 days.

It should be noted that in our paper, disappearance of *P. ovale* was clearly demonstrated from lesions localized on the eyebrows but not from sites where high numbers of colony-forming units are obtained, even in

healthy individuals. This may be an indication that the method employed for enumeration of *Pityrosporum* is too sensitive!

The direct or indirect role played by *P. ovale* in seborrhoeic dermatitis is still controversial [4], and we agree that the obtained results make no contribution to the debate concerning the possible microbial aetiology of seborrhoeic dermatitis. However, one cannot rule out some effect of lithium succinate on the abnormal host reaction elicited by this commensal lipophilic yeast in (certain) patients with seborrhoeic dermatitis.

References

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