# 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. The mandate of this JOURNAL is to disseminate information relating to leprosy in particular and also other mycobacterial diseases. Dissident comment or interpretation on published research is of course valid but personality attacks on individuals would seem unnecessary. Political comments, valid or not, also are unwelcome. They might result in interference with the distribution of the JOURNAL and thus interfere with its prime purpose.*

## Inhibition of Rubino Factor as a Test for Detecting Antigens Common to Leprosy Bacilli

To The Editor:

Rubino (Ann. Inst. Pasteur **47** [1931] 147-172) factor is found in most sera from lepromatous leprosy patients and it is considered specific for leprosy. This factor produces the clumping and rapid sedimentation of formolized sheep red blood cells and it was found only in leprous patients.

Antigens from *in vivo* grown *M. leprae* were found to neutralize this factor, inhibiting the reaction. The inhibition of Rubino test was also detected with antigens produced from cultures of some mycobacteria: *M. avium, M. gallinarum, M. tuberculosis, M. kansasii, M. simiae, M. abcessus, M. borstelense, M. capsulatus, M. peregrinum, M. xenopii, M. marianum* and *M. scrofulaceum* (Almeida and Kwapinski, Publ. Cent. Est. Leprol. **14** [1974] 73-90). Antigens produced from *M. fortuitum, M. intracellulare, Actinomyces israeli* and *A. naeslundi* did not neutralize the Rubino factor.

The inhibition of Rubino factor may be a test for detection of antigens shared with *M. leprae.*

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## Initiation of Armadillo Program

To The Editor:

I have read with growing concern the public letters and notes which have appeared in IJL (**45:** 298-299, 1977; **45:** 64-65, 1977), ASM News, and LSM written by Dr. Kirchheimer (and in one case by Dr. K. Prabhakaran) concerning the genesis of the armadillo-leprosy program. I dislike public controversy, but I feel that a few clarifying statements in regard to the start of the armadillo-leprosy program are in order to protect my scientific reputation specifically, as well as aid the cause of women in science generally.

I first made the suggestion that the armadillo might be a useful animal for the study of leprosy at a meeting with members of the U.S. Leprosy Panel at Gulf South Research Institute on March 19, 1968. This was later confirmed in a memorandum written by Dr. C. C. Shepard dated September 7, 1971.

The reasons for my making this suggestion are fully disclosed in papers written by me which have appeared in IJL (**39:** 703-714, 1971) and Leprosy Review (**45:** 8-14, 1974).

Dr. Kirchheimer was not present at this meeting, but a panel member suggested