

PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY SERVICE
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CENTRAL PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY,
COLINDALE AVENUE,
LONDON, N.W.9.

15th November 1951

Dear Professor Lederberg,

My friend Luigi Cavalli tells me that you are thinking of starting work on the antigens of E.Coli K12. I started an investigation of these some time ago which I had to abandon because of pressure of other work but my results might be of some interest to you as far as they went. I prepared antisera for the H and K antigens of 58 - 161, and W - 677 and also for the O though the organism seems to be Rough and may not possess a proper O. I hoped that there might be some easily detected antigenic difference between the two recombining strains and that this could be associated with a single locus, but I was unable to find any clearly marked differences. If any exist I am sure they are due to capsular antigens of the K - type as I had promising results in this direction, though the conditions for constant results are elusive. Incidentally, both Cavalli and I have been unable to type K 12 by Kauffmann's scheme as it is agglutinated by all his sera. This may be due to natural antigens as I found that about 2/3 of normal rabbit sera will agglutinate the organism and one has to bear this in mind in preparing antisera. The proportion rises as the animals get older.

If you would like samples of the antisera I prepared I should be glad to let you have them together with a full account of how they were made. They are, incidently, quite useful for eliminating contaminants in other experiments.

Yours sincerely,

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