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etymologia

Mycobacterium

[mi'-ko-bak-tēr-eəm], from the Greek—myces (fungus) and baktērion (little rod)

The only genus of bacteria in the family *Mycobacteriaceae*. In 1882, German scientist Robert Koch reported the discovery of a bacillus from the lung tubercles that caused tuberculosis. Earlier, Norwegian researcher G.H.A. Hansen had identified a similar microbe which caused leprosy. In 1896, the genus name *Mycobacterium*, from the Middle Latin noun meaning fungus rodlet, was proposed to include these new pathogens, *M. tuberculosis* and *M. leprae*. The name does not mean that mycobacteria are fungi; rather, the tubercle bacilli grow on the surface of liquid media as moldlike pellicles when cultured. The nonmotile, acid-fast, aerobic organisms in this genus cause numerous human and animal diseases.

Source: Sources: Savin JA, Wilkinson DS. Mycobacterial infections including tuberculosis. In: Rook A, Wilkinson DS, Ebling FJG, Champion RH, Burton JL, editors. *Textbook of dermatology.* Vol.1, 4th ed. Boston: Blackwell Scientific Publications; 1986. p. 791–822. Goodfellow M, Magee JG. Taxonomy of mycobacteria. In: *Mycobacteria: basic aspects.* Gangadharam PRJ, Jenkins PA, editors. Boca Raton (FL): Chapman & Hall; 1998. p.1. Wayne LG. The “atypical” mycobacteria: recognition and disease association. *CRC Crit Rev Microbiol.* 1985;12:185–222.