

CORRESPONDENCE

Re: "Constitutive melanin in the cell wall of the etiologic agent of Lobo's disease"

São Paulo, April 26, 1999.

Dear Editor,

We read with interest the paper by TABORDA *et al.* "Constitutive melanin in the cell wall of the etiologic agent of Lobo's disease", recently published in the Revista do Instituto de Medicina Tropical de São Paulo¹.

The authors investigated the presence of melanin in *P. lobo*i and *P. brasiliensis*, using the Fontana-Masson stain, and reported that *P. lobo*i contains constitutive melanine as opposed to *P. brasiliensis*.

However some authors have looked at melaninogenesis in *Cryptococcus neoformans* and have concluded that silver-reducing compounds in the fungal cell wall, as demonstrated by the Fontana-Masson technique, are unlikely to be melanin. They may be catecholamine oxidation products, which do not undergo postenzymatic polymerization to form typical eumelanin².

Therefore we wonder whether the data on the *in vivo* production of melanin by *P. lobo*i should not be reviewed.

REFERENCES

1. TABORDA, V.B.A.; TABORDA, P.R.O. & MCGINNIS, M.R. - Constitutive melanin in the cell wall of the etiologic agent of Lobo's disease. **Rev. Inst. Med. trop. S. Paulo**, **41**: 9-12, 1999.
2. LIU, L.; WAKAMATSU, K.; ITO, S. & WILLIAMSON, P.R. - Catecholamine oxidative products, but not melanin, are produced by *Cryptococcus neoformans* during neuropathogenesis in mice. **Infect. Immun.**, **67**: 108-112, 1999.

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