



# Murine Roseolovirus, Historically Known as Murine Thymic Lymphotropic Virus

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**KEYWORD** herpesviruses

We recently read a paper by Patel et al. (1) in which the authors present a novel murine herpesvirus that can induce severe thymic necrosis and T cell depletion in neonatal mice and has not been found before. The authors named this virus murine roseolovirus (MRV) on the basis of its homology to human herpesvirus 6A (HHV-6A), HHV-6B, and HHV-7.

However, in the laboratory animal medicine field, another murine herpesvirus, a mouse thymic lymphotropic virus (MTLV; also known as MTV; International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses [ICTV] designation, murid herpesvirus 3) affecting neonatal mouse T lymphocyte development and causing thymic necrosis, has been investigated and studied for decades (2). In our laboratory, which develops assays for murine pathogens, we have developed diagnostic tools that utilize the same virus isolate originating from the NIH described in the original paper (3, 4). As part of some recent efforts to develop recombinant antigens for MTLV, last fall, we completed a nearly complete sequence of the MTLV genome. At the time we sequenced it, there were no closely related viruses sequences deposited in GenBank. However, in a recent analysis, we found that the sequence we determined for MTLV is 100% identical to the newly reported MRV sequence, at its reverse complementary position of bp 7491 to 161219. Therefore, we conclude that MRV is the same virus that has been historically known as MTLV. In the abstract, there is reference to MRV having phenotypes similar to those of MTV, but it appears that the authors did not pursue a reference stock of MTLV to determine if the viruses were, in fact, the same.

Having said this, we feel that it is important that the virology community is aware that MRV and MTLV are the same virus so that previous publications where MTLV has been investigated will also be associated with studies that investigate MRV. A task falling in the realm of the ICTV will be to attain a consensus on the nomenclature used for this virus.

## REFERENCES

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