

“Colored raindrops from the sky” An entry in *JMM Case Reports* Image of the Month Competition

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Short description

Mention microbes and people would naturally become cautious or afraid. But, microbes are everywhere: in air, on and in the soil, on various surfaces and even in water if we left it exposed on our desk for too long. Most importantly, many microorganisms are harmless and some are even beneficial or essential to life on Earth. The standard approach for culturing microorganisms is the solid medium (or agar medium) method where microorganisms are spread on agar with nutrients formulated to facilitate the growth of more microbes. By their name, microorganisms are invisible to the naked eye and could only be seen under a microscope. Thus, expansion of cell numbers through growth on solid medium is an indirect method for visualizing microbes since each individual microbe cell give rise to a visible colony. And, they exhibit myriad colors through the pigments they secrete. Moreover, when contrasted with the colorless background of the formulated agar medium they grew on,^{1 2} the microorganism colonies appeared to be “colored raindrops from the sky”. Taking a different perspective in observing things around us often give us a refreshing take on a mundane topic that enables us to open up a problem previously not obvious or could not

be solved. Similarly, in medicine, revisiting an old assumption and taking a fresh look at the circumstances can help unlock a solution path to a problem not anticipated or encountered. This is a repost of an entry to January 2014 *JMM Case Reports* Image of the Month competition and the original photo is appended. The link to the entry is:

<http://www.microbiologysociety.org/publications/journals/jmm-case-reports-image-gallery/index.cfm>

Keywords: spread plate, solid medium, inoculation, serial dilution, color contrast, pigment, colony morphology,

Subject areas: microbiology, environmental sciences,

References

1. Ng, W. & Ting, Y.-P. Colorless agar for enhanced color contrast between microbe colonies and solid medium. *PeerJ Prepr.* **4**, e89v4 (2016).
2. Wenfa Ng. Colourless Agar for Enhancing Colour Contrast between Colonies and Solid Medium. (2015).

Conflicts of interest

This is a repost of an earlier entry to the January 2014 *JMM Case Reports* Image of the Month competition.

Author's contribution

The author is concerned that the original webpage may not be available indefinitely, and thus, decided to post a preprint to chronicle this image of the month competition entry.

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