

Newsletter 32 (May 2013)

Disc Testing of Nocardia sp: Recently we reviewed the method of disc testing of Nocardia sp. We were concerned that the zones of inhibition were not clear-cut and we suspected that there could be some difficulty in measuring the zone sizes particularly by staff who did not have a lot of experience in testing this relatively uncommon organism. A field trial was set up where both the annular radii of inhibitory zones and the interpretations of sensitivities were reported by 20 scientists at 2 laboratories using 5 strains of Nocardia. In summary there was an unsatisfactory variation in several of the zone sizes reported and there were a number of inconsistent reports of sensitivities. Studies on overcoming these problems are continuing but in the meantime we will withdraw our recommendations for disc testing of Nocardia. We recommend that if laboratories are unable to test sensitivity by quantitative techniques (not involving agar diffusion) that they send the isolates for testing to the CDS Reference Laboratory at Randwick.