

SUMMARY

During exposure to the ambient environment, group A streptococci lost infectivity for mice more rapidly than viability. The loss of infectivity was accompanied by a striking reduction of the size of the streptococcal capsule. Comparisons of the rates of loss of infectivity during environmental exposure of capsulated and noncapsulated bacteria suggested that the major effect of environmental exposure was on the capsule, a known determinant of infectivity. Accelerated drying promoted the loss of infectivity.

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