culture B) and do similar competition experiments. This can be done reciprocally with different ratios of A and B in different experiments. If the 10-day old culture can out-compete the one day old culture, it is an indication that the former has more GASP mutants than the latter. This can be repeated with cultures that have been in stationary phase for different number of days.

As the cultures age, one can also look at colonies of the survivors to record if there are any morphological variations. If the laboratory has a PCR machine, one can also attempt to find differences at the genomic level by using methods such as RAPD (this involves amplification of different segments of the genomic DNA using random pairs of PCR primers). The genetic characterization of loci that confer a GASP phenotype will be the real challenge. So far, only very few such loci conferring GASP phenotype have been characterized at the functional level [2]. Thus studying aged cultures in the laboratory can give several hints about microbial survival in the real world.

Suggested Reading


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**Our Readers Write ...**

I am a freelance engineer and take classes for children in the nearby school to motivate them to excel in science. I enjoyed the *Resonance* article on Louis Pasteur. It was very nice; so were the articles on Einstein in the 2005 *Resonance* issues. I do not know how the journal will appeal to our school children. I wish they read it. I also hope that you can publish pictorial biographies on such seminal researchers for children.

*Shankar, Chennai*

Please accept my sincere wishes.

I read the article ‘The Legend of Louis Pasteur’ by S Mahadevan (*Resonance*, January 2007). Thank you for such an encouraging and inspiring article. I found the article ‘Mechanochemistry: The Amazing Viral DNA Packaging Molecular Motor’ by K L Sebastian (*Resonance*, May 2007) was worthy reading, interesting and encouraging.

*Ajay K Runthala, Pilani, Rajasthan*