Reply to Raoult

To the Editor—We share Dr Raoult’s opinion that most likely it will be possible to cultivate Candidatus Neoehrlichia mikurensis in the future, as has been the case for other species of the Anaplasmataceae family. The statement in the abstract of our manuscript [1] that the bacterium is not cultivable simply referred to the fact that nobody has reported its culture since the first description of its 16S ribosomal RNA sequence 15 years ago [2]. In the introductory section of our manuscript, we specified the current status of Candidatus Neoehrlichia mikurensis [3] as an uncultured bacterium and cited the initial studies that reported on the same bacterium under different names (references 10–15 of our article [1]). It should be emphasized that unlike these earlier publications, the study of Kawahara et al [3] not only detected the bacterium by polymerase chain reaction in ticks, but also found it in mammalian hosts (wild rats on Mikura Island, Japan) and even showed that Candidatus Neoehrlichia mikurensis was transferable to laboratory rats.

The culture of Candidatus Neoehrlichia mikurensis would allow for the removal of “Candidatus” from its name, the development of serological assays (eg, indirect fluorescent antibody tests) similar to those used for the diagnosis of anaplasmosis and ehrlichiosis, and analysis of its pathogenicity and the mechanisms of control by the immune system. However, already now it is possible
to design more sensitive molecular assays for detection and, as documented in our article [1], to successfully treat patients with neoehrlichiosis by the administration of doxycycline.

**Note**

_Potential conflicts of interest._ All authors: No reported conflicts.

All authors have submitted the ICMJE Form for Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest. Conflicts that the editors consider relevant to the content of the manuscript have been disclosed.

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**References**


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