The American Type Culture Collection (ATCC) is a unique, private, nonprofit resource established in 1925 and dedicated to the collection, preservation, and distribution of authentic cultures of living microorganisms and animal cells. ATCC is invaluable to the scientific community as a major resource of microorganisms and cell lines. Research efforts of ATCC are focused on comparative microbiology, microbial systematics, and improved methods of characterization and preservation of cultures.

ATCC maintains over 25,000 strains of bacteria, fungi, protozoa, algae, viruses, and cells. More than 25,000 cultures are distributed annually to the scientific community.

Catalogs of ATCC list over 18,000 "standard ATCC strains" of significance in quality control, microbiological assay, testing, fermentation technology, and education or research programs. Detailed descriptions cite historical information, culture medium, references, special applications, and other data. Catalogs are published biennially.

A high proportion of cell lines in the ATCC have been banked and utilized for cancer research. Specific lines from normal and tumor tissues have proliferative, biosynthetic, biochemical, or other cytological characteristics which are invaluable in this field. Many strains included may also be used as substrates or target cells for oncogenic viruses. Research conducted in the Cell Culture Department at ATCC involves not only characterization of these various cellular species but also derivation and study of novel cell lines from normal, high-cancer-risk tissues.

ATCC is expanding its holdings of oncogenic viruses, under a major program of preservation, characterization, and experimentation with reference strains of oncogenic viruses.

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Pictured are ATCC facilities at 12301 Parklawn Drive, Rockville, Maryland 20852, and photographs of a clonally derived epithelial cell line (AR21A) from rat pancreas. A, phase-contrast image after treatment by a modified Gomori technique to demonstrate acid phosphatase; B, identical area photographed without phase optics to demonstrate phosphatase-positive inclusion bodies; C, electron micrograph of cells pulse-labeled with colloidal gold.

M.B.S.