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Sommario/riassunto

Pathogenic bacteria have unique biological properties, which enable them to invade a host and cause sickness. The molecular bases of these biological properties are the determinants of pathogenicity, and the research objectives are to recognize them, identify them chemically and relate their structure to function. Most of our present knowledge comes from studies with cultures *in vitro*. However, there is a rising interest in bacterial behaviour in the infected host and new methods have been developed for studying it.
