

# Letters in Applied Microbiology

Volume 41 | Number 6 | 2005 | pages 445–516

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**Cover illustration** Scanning electron microscopy of magnetic PVA-R8 bead. Cells distribution at different positions in section of a bead. From Guobin, Jianmin, Chen, Huizhou and Jiayong (2005) *Letters in Applied Microbiology* 40, 30–36.



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0266-8254 (200512) 41:06;1-1

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