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What's In Your Wallet?

Are there more microorganisms on paper money or coins? The problem for this project sprouted from the general question, what is on money? The material is really the only difference between the bills and the coins since they are circulated the same. In order to test the problem three one dollar bills and three quarters were used. Each bill was inoculated in three different places and each coin was inoculated three times. Each bill was inoculated by being pressed into an agar-filled Petri dish and then removed. All of the coins were inoculated by being pressed into the dishes with gloved hands and then removed. All of the Petri dishes were put into an incubator for thirty hours. The results were clear: All of the dishes inoculated with the dollar bills had large quantities of bacteria colonies. All of the bills had mold on them. On the other hand, the dishes for the coins contained very few bacteria colonies. Only one of the coins had mold on it. Based on the data I collected, it can be concluded that there are a lot more bacteria on bills than there are on coins. The results also showed that there are a profuse amount of bacteria on bills. Paper money is clearly a home for bacteria so people should be wary of washing their hands after coming in contact with money, especially bills.