Proposal to amend Rule 61 of the International Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria (1990 revision)

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It is proposed to modify the Note of Rule 61 as follows: 'The liberty of correcting a name or epithet under Rules 61, 62a and 62b must be used with reserve especially i) if the change affects the first syllable and above all the first letter of the name or epithet, and ii) if a name or epithet is cited in the Approved Lists of Bacterial Names.'


According to Rule 57a and to Rule 61 of the Bacteriological Code (1990 Revision) (Lapage et al., 1992), more than 320 other names are mis-spelled and should be corrected (Euzéby, 1997):

Names combined from words of Latin and Greek origin. Examples: Bifidobacterium, Blattabacterium, Flavobacterium, Lactobacillus, Pasteurella multocida and Rhodita deniocariosa should be changed to Bifidobacterium, Blatti-bacterium, Flavibacterium, Lacticibacillus, Pasteurella multi-cida and Rhodia denticariosa, respectively.

Specific epithets treated as adjectives that do not agree in gender with the generic names. Examples: Polyangium minor and Streptomyces pactum should be changed to Polyangium minus and Streptomyces pactus, respectively.

Genus names formed from personal names. Example: Cowdria should be changed to Cowdrya.

Specific epithets formed from personal names. Examples: Alteromonas espejiana, Kingella kingae, Simonsiella steedae and Streptomyces cavourii should be changed to Altero-monas espejoiana (or espejiana), Kingella kingiae, Simonsiella steedae and Streptomyces cavourii (or Streptomyces cavourianus), respectively.

Specific epithets derived from names of localities. Examples: Actinomadura madurae, Moraxella atlantae and Mycobacterium chitae should be changed to Actinomadura madu-rensis, Moraxella atlantensis and Mycobacterium chitense, respectively.

I think that such changes are not desirable for the following reasons:

• The Approved Lists of Bacterial Names are reference documents.

• Some nomenclatural names have been used for many years (for example, Lactobacillus since 1901, Flavobacterium since 1923, and Pasteurella multocida since 1939).

• Some changes result in more complicated names (for example, Alteromonas espejiana).

• The changes are a source of confusion and many bacteriologists are not strong supporters of too many corrections and consider these changes to be unnecessary and unimportant for science.

Thus, I propose that the Note of Rule 61 be amended as follows: 'The liberty of correcting a name or epithet under Rules 61, 62a and 62b must be used with reserve especially i) if the change affects the first syllable and above all the first letter of the name or epithet, and ii) if a name or epithet is cited in the Approved Lists of Bacterial Names.'

References


