

TAXONOMIC NOTE

The modern Latin word *rhabdus* belongs to the feminine gender, inducing necessary corrections according to Rules 65(2), 12c(1) and 13b of the Bacteriological Code (1990 Revision)

Jean P. Euzéby¹ and Noël E. Boemare²

Author for correspondence: Jean P. Euzéby. Tel: +33 5 61 19 38 00. Fax: +33 5 61 19 39 75.
e-mail: j.euzeby@envt.fr

¹ Laboratoire de Bactériologie, Ecole Nationale Vétérinaire, 23 Chemin des Capelles, F-31076 Toulouse Cedex 03, France

² Laboratoire de Pathologie comparée, CP 101, UMR CNRS-INRA-UMRI 5087, IFR 56 'Biologie cellulaire et processus infectieux', Université Montpellier II, F-34095 Montpellier Cedex 5, France

The modern Latin word *rhabdus* does belong to the feminine gender. According to Rules 65(2), 12c(1) and 13b of the Bacteriological Code (1990 Revision), the gender of six generic names and the spelling of nine specific and subspecific epithets are proposed to be corrected.

Keywords: nomenclatural changes, *rhabdus*, Bacteriological Code

According to Rule 65(2) of the Bacteriological Code (1990 Revision) (Lapage *et al.*, 1992), generic and subgeneric names which are modern compounds from two or more Latin or Greek words take the gender of the last component of the compound word. The Greek noun *rhabdos* (a rod) is in the feminine gender. Consequently, the modern latin name *rhabdus* becomes a feminine word and the generic names that end in *-rhabdus* have to be in the feminine gender. References for effective and valid publications of the names cited below can be found in the *List of Bacterial Names with Standing in Nomenclature* (Euzéby, 1997).

Recently, Fischer-Le Saux *et al.* (1999) have corrected the gender of the genus *Photorhabdus* (Boemare *et al.*, 1993). Such a correction should be applied also for the following generic names: *Anaerorhabdus* Shah and Collins 1986, *Desulforhabdus* Oude Elferink *et al.* 1997, *Halorhabdus* Wainø *et al.* 2000, *Methylorhabdus* Doronina *et al.* 1996, *Thermodesulforhabdus* Beeder *et al.* 1996 and *Xenorhabdus* Thomas and Poinar 1979 (Approved Lists 1980). Consequently these genera have to be considered as of the feminine gender, and not of the masculine gender.

According to Rules 12c(1) and 13b, specific epithets and subspecific epithets treated as adjectives must agree in gender with the generic names. So, we propose that the names *Anaerorhabdus furcosus* (Veillon and Zuber 1898) Shah and Collins 1986, *Desulforhabdus amnigenus* Oude Elferink *et al.* 1997, *Thermodesulforhabdus norvegicus* Beeder *et al.* 1996, *Xenorhabdus japonicus* Nishimura *et al.* 1995, *Xenorhabdus*

nematophilus (Poinar and Thomas 1965) Thomas and Poinar 1979 (Approved Lists 1980), *Xenorhabdus nematophilus* subsp. *beddingii* Akhurst 1986, *Xenorhabdus nematophilus* subsp. *bovienii* Akhurst 1983, *Xenorhabdus nematophilus* subsp. *nematophilus* (Poinar and Thomas 1965) Thomas and Poinar 1979 (Approved Lists 1980) and *Xenorhabdus nematophilus* subsp. *poinarii* Akhurst 1983, should be changed to *Anaerorhabdus furcosa*, *Desulforhabdus amnigena*, *Thermodesulforhabdus norvegica*, *Xenorhabdus japonica*, *Xenorhabdus nematophila*, *Xenorhabdus nematophila* subsp. *beddingii*, *Xenorhabdus nematophila* subsp. *bovienii*, *Xenorhabdus nematophila* subsp. *nematophila* and *Xenorhabdus nematophila* subsp. *poinarii*, respectively.

The above proposal modifies several names that were in use for a long time. It is not a lack of respect for microbiologists (Kilian, 1998), but application of regulations to be in accordance with the Bacteriological Code (1990 Revision) (Lapage *et al.*, 1992) in order to avoid subsequent confusion. In fact, from 1 January 2000, new names will be corrected for orthographic mistakes before any valid publication (H. G. Trüper, personal communication). If authors now propose a new specific epithet treated as an adjective for species belonging to the genera *Anaerorhabdus*, *Desulforhabdus*, *Halorhabdus*, *Methylorhabdus*, *Thermodesulforhabdus* or *Xenorhabdus*, this new epithet will be in the feminine gender. Consequently we highly recommend to transform such previously masculine names into feminine names in order to avoid a mixing

of both genders for species belonging to the six genera whose composed names end in *-rhabdus*.

References

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