

Proposal to conserve the adjectival form of the specific epithet in the reclassification of *Bacteroides forsythus* Tanner *et al.* 1986 to the genus *Tannerella* Sakamoto *et al.* 2002 as *Tannerella forsythia* corrig., gen. nov., comb. nov. Request for an Opinion

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With reference to the first Principle of the *International Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria*, which emphasizes stability of names, it is proposed that the original adjectival form of the specific epithet be conserved in the reclassification of *Bacteroides forsythus* to the new genus *Tannerella*. Thus, *Tannerella forsythensis* Sakamoto *et al.* 2002 should be *Tannerella forsythia* Sakamoto *et al.* 2002 corrig., gen. nov., comb. nov., and we put forward a Request for an Opinion to the Judicial Commission regarding this correction.

A new genus, *Tannerella*, has recently been proposed (Sakamoto *et al.*, 2002) for the oral anaerobe *Bacteroides forsythus* (Tanner *et al.*, 1986), in accordance with previous genetic data (Paster *et al.*, 1994). The original species name of the organism used the valid adjectival form *forSythus*, 'of Forsyth', referring to The Forsyth Institute, named for the founding Forsyth family, where the organism was first described. Although in this form the specific epithet included an orthographic error, this is readily corrected to *Bacteroides forsythius* corrig. (-*ius* being a clear adjectival form while -*us* is ambiguous). The only grammatical change required upon reclassification of the species to the new genus *Tannerella* (N.L. fem. n.) is therefore a change in gender agreement, thus N.L. fem. adj. *forSythia*. This minimal change is in accordance with the first Principle of the *International Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria* (The Code; Lapage *et al.*, 1992), which aims at the stability of names to reduce the possibility of errors or confusion.

The specific epithet proposed for the new combination, *forSythensis* (Sakamoto *et al.*, 2002), uses a different adjectival form from the original and this is a grammatically unnecessary change that may be confusing to researchers in the field. This form also constitutes a different epithet, thus the proposed combination is not in accordance with Rule 41a of The Code, which states that the specific epithet must be retained when a species is transferred from one

genus to another. Further, the Latin ending -*ensis*/*-ense* is most appropriately used linguistically to indicate 'belonging to' or 'coming from' a geographical location in terms of a city, region or country, in the sense of inhabiting, or materially originating in, that place. This is the context in which the ending is applied for most bacterial species names that use it. In historical Latin usage, an institution or building would be considered too limited a location to warrant the -*ensis* ending, plus an institution is rarely inhabited (infected) by the organisms that may be described there. This is especially so with human commensal or pathogenic species that are isolated from subjects of diverse geographical origins who merely visit the institution to be sampled. For these reasons, an epithet in the simple adjectival form is more appropriate to associate a species with an institution.

From the reasons described above, we herein propose that, in the reclassification of *Bacteroides forsythus* Tanner *et al.* 1986 to the genus *Tannerella* Sakamoto *et al.* 2002, the original adjectival form of the specific epithet be conserved in the combination *Tannerella forsythia* corrig., gen. nov., comb. nov., and we put forward a Request for an Opinion to the Judicial Commission regarding this point.

References

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