

This form should be used for all taxonomic proposals. Please complete all those modules that are applicable.

For guidance, see the notes written in blue and the separate document "Help with completing a taxonomic proposal"



Please try to keep related proposals within a single document.

Part 1: **TITLE, AUTHORS, etc**

Code assigned:	2017.003G	(to be completed by ICTV officers)
Short title: (e.g. 6 new species in the genus <i>Zetavirus</i>)		
Modules attached (Modules 1, 4 and either 2 or 3 are required.)	1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/>	

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List the ICTV study group(s) that have seen this proposal:

A list of study groups and contacts is provided at <http://www.ictvonline.org/subcommittees.asp> . If in doubt, contact the appropriate subcommittee chair (there are six virus subcommittees: animal DNA and retroviruses, animal ssRNA-, animal ssRNA+, fungal and protist, plant, bacterial and archaeal)

N/A – Directly to ICTV EC

ICTV Study Group comments (if any) and response of the proposer:

N/A

Date first submitted to ICTV:

June 8, 2017

Date of this revision (if different to above):

ICTV-EC comments and response of the proposer:

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Part 3: NON-STANDARD

Template for any proposal regarding ICTV procedures, rules or policy, not involving the creation of new taxonomy.

non-standard proposal

Title of proposal: Change ICVCN Rule 3.11
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Text of proposal:**Introduction**

"The International Code of Virus Classification and Nomenclature, April 2016" (ICVCN, <https://talk.ictvonline.org/information/w/ictv-information/383/ictv-code>) states in Section 3.II - Rules about naming Taxa, under Rule 3.11: "No person's name shall be used when devising names for new taxa." It also includes the "Comment: New taxon names shall not be created by adopting a person's name, by adding a formal ending to a person's name or by using part of a person's name to create a stem for a name."

We argue that this Rule constrains taxon naming considerably and deprives nomenclature of the necessary flexibility to avoid non-memorable alphanumerical naming systems (e.g., *Avian avulavirus 1*, *Avian avulavirus 2*, *Avian avulavirus 3*, or *Alphaherpesvirus*, *Betaherpesvirus*, *Gammaherpesvirus*) or the taxonomic creep of the root names (e.g., *T1virus*→*Tunavirinae*→*Tunaviridae*→*Tunavirales*). Alphanumerical naming systems are ultimately impossible to maintain as virus classification will have to change for the foreseeable future due to our still very limited understanding of the diversity of the global virome. Thus, individual taxa will have to move frequently or will have to be split, merged, or abandoned and these actions will cause any alphanumerical list to be disrupted, thereby requiring taxon name changes rather than ensuring relative stability of nomenclature. In addition, numbers are easily confused, thereby leading almost inevitably to errors in databases. These problems do not exist in other (zoological, botanic, fungal, prokaryotic) taxonomies.

- In prokaryotic taxonomy, experts do not refer to "*Escherichia 1–5*", but instead use the much more distinct and elegant "*Escherichia albertii*, *E. coli*, *E. fergusonii*, *E. hermanii*, and *E. vulneris*"
- In zoological taxonomy, the order Coleoptera (beetles) alone includes 400,000 species in hundreds of families. None of the families or of the species are named alphanumerically. In comparison, virus taxonomy currently recognizes a mere 4,405 species total and yet virologists lament (probably justifiably) that they have difficulties in devising distinct taxon names.

A cursory glance at non-virological nomenclature codes reveals that all of them allow the use of person names either directly or as the basis for taxon name composites or portmanteaux (sigla). Person names are used to honor major researchers dead or alive of a particular subfield (e.g., the prokaryotic species *Escherichia hermanii* is named after the American microbiologists George J. Hermann and Lloyd G. Herman; the fungal subdivision Kickxellomycotina is named after Jean Kickx) or are used tongue-in-cheek (e.g., the spider species *Aptostichus stephencolberti* was named after US comedian Stephen Colbert; the extinct placoderm *Materpiscis attenboroughi* was named after English broadcaster Sir David Frederick Attenborough). For more details see: 317 bacterial genera which are derived from the names of people (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_bacterial_genera_named_after_personal_names); and, 489 animals named after famous people (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_organisms_named_after_famous_people). Whether a

taxon name based on a person's name is deemed acceptable/appropriate simply falls under the judgement of specific taxonomy committees.

Proposal

We propose that ICVCN Rule 3.11 be changed to

"A person's name may be used when devising a name for new taxon. If the person is alive at the time of the proposal, the person's written consent for use of his/her name must be provided together with the official taxonomic proposal. Whether the use of a person's name for taxon naming is appropriate will be judged by the responsible ICTV Study Group, the respective ICTV Subcommittee, and the ICTV Executive Committee and approved or disapproved following established taxonomic proposal procedures. Furthermore, a) An individual may not propose his/her own name as the basis for any new taxon name; and, b) A taxon may not be named wholly or in part after any current member of an ICTV Study Group or committee."
