ICTV and the Virology Division News

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Introduction

A recent critique of some aspects of the affairs of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses (ICTV) [3] suggests that the link between ICTV and the papers that appear in Virology Division News (VDN) concerning virus taxonomy is unclear. This note is intended to clarify this link and also to illustrate how it has operated in the last several years.

Background

The constitution of ICTV stipulates that a primary purpose of ICTV is to communicate the results of its deliberations to virologists at large [5]. Whilst this has been, and is, done by preparation of Reports, for example Murphy et al. [6] and van Regenmortel et al. [9], there are intervals between Reports when decisions are made and issues are raised that cannot wait for their resolution until the next taxonomic report is published. *Archives of Virology* is the official journal of the Virology Division of the International Union of Microbiological Societies (IUMS) and ICTV is a committee of the Virology Division of IUMS. Thus ICTV is entitled to use the pages of *Archives of Virology* that are designated for use as “Virology Division News”.

Contents of VDN

In practice, most of the material in VDN is ICTV business and to reflect this one of the ICTV Secretaries acts as the editor of these pages of *Archives of Virology*. Articles report the outcomes of meetings of the Executive Committee of ICTV and of the triennial Plenary Meetings, as well as updates to the Statutes of ICTV and the International Code of Virus Taxonomy and Nomenclature (see Table 1). The Executive Committee recently resolved to increase its efforts to provide virologists with the background to the decisions taken by ICTV. Articles in VDN are the most suitable means of fulfilling this intention; there have been such articles in previous editions (see Table 1) and more are planned.

Dialogue between ICTV and the virology community

VDN has carried papers that have been designed to provoke discussion prior to a decision being taken. It has also carried papers that have contained critical comment on what ICTV

has done. The recent series of papers that have arisen as reaction to changes in the Rules concerning orthographic conventions [1–4, 7, 8] are a clear illustration of this role. Decisions as to how long to sustain a “debate” of this type, and indeed whether or not a particular paper needs an invited response, are taken by the editor.

To illustrate the scope of articles in VDN, Table 1 presents titles of VDN articles from the last 10 years that have been related to taxonomic matters.

Origins of articles

Articles have come mainly from within ICTV as they are written by Study Group Chairs or Executive Committee members mainly in order to inform virologists of ICTV decisions.

Table 1. Publications in *Virology Division News* on taxonomic matters

<i>Viruses of vertebrates</i>	
117, 137–140	The order <i>Mononegavirales</i> . (CR Pringle)
123, 425–449	The family <i>Herpesviridae</i> : an update. (B Roizman et al.)
128, 395–396	Genus <i>Torovirus</i> assigned to the <i>Coronaviridae</i> . (D Cavanagh and MC Horzinek)
129, 363–366	Human herpesvirus-6 strain groups: a nomenclature. (D Ablashi et al.)
134, 216–217	Pestivirus diversity. (MC Horzinek)
135, 227–237	Revision of the taxonomy of the <i>Coronavirus</i> , <i>Torovirus</i> and <i>Arterivirus</i> genera. (D Cavanagh)
142, 629–633	<i>Nidovirales</i> : a new order comprising <i>Coronaviridae</i> and <i>Arteriviridae</i> . (D Cavanagh)
142, 2321–2326	The order <i>Mononegavirales</i> – current status. (CR Pringle)
143, 2433–2503	A proposal for a new (third) genus within the family <i>Adenoviridae</i> . (M Benko and B Harrach)
143, 2493–2503	Classification, nomenclature, and database development of hepatitis C virus (HCV) and related viruses: proposals for standardisation. (B Robertson et al.)
144, 835–840	Progress and Controversy in Bornavirus Research: A Meeting Report. (M Schwemmle)
<i>Viruses of plants</i>	
118, 139–141	<i>Potyviridae</i> , a proposed family of plant viruses. (OW Barnett)
120, 151–164	A list of proposed standard acronyms for plant viruses and viroids. (R Hull et al.)
131, 483–488	Proposed classification of the bipartite-genomed raspberry bushy dwarf ideovirus, with tripartite-genomed viruses in the family <i>Bromoviridae</i> . (A Ziegler et al.)
132, 221–224	Geminivirus nomenclature: the need to set taxonomic standards. (DE Rochester et al.)
133, 496–498	New families and genera of plant viruses. (MA Mayo and GP Martelli)
134, 451–455	<i>Trichovirus</i> , a new genus of plant viruses. (GP Martelli et al.)
139, 231–235	Taxonomy and classification of legume-infecting potyviruses. A proposal from the <i>Potyviriidae</i> Study Group of the Plant Virus Subcommittee of ICTV.
140, 393–413	Updated ICTV list of names and abbreviations of viruses, viroids, and satellites infecting plants. (CM Fauquet and GP Martelli)
141, 205–206	The potyvirus sequence database: a project of the Potyvirus Working Group of the Plant Virus Subcommittee of ICTV. (P Berger and E Rybicki)
142, 435–439	Proposed reclassification of furoviruses. (LTorrance and MA Mayo)
142, 1285–1287	Proposals for changes in luteovirus taxonomy and nomenclature. (CJ D’Arcy and M Mayo)
142, 1929–1932	<i>Vitivirus</i> , a new genus of plant viruses. (GP Martelli et al.)
142, 1933–1936	<i>Oleavirus</i> , a new genus in the family <i>Bromoviridae</i> . (GP Martelli and F Grieco)
142, 2553–2562	A proposal for naming geminiviruses. (M Padidam et al.)
143, 421–424	A proposal for naming geminiviruses: a reply by the <i>Geminiviridae</i> Study Group Chair. (EP Rybicki)
143, 623–629	A proposed scheme for viroid classification and nomenclature. (R Flores et al.)
143, 1245–1249	<i>Foveavirus</i> , a new plant virus genus. (GP Martelli and W Jelkmann)
	<i>Aureusvirus</i> , a novel genus in the family <i>Tombusviridae</i> . (GP Martelli et al.)
144, 1659–1666	Developments in plant virus taxonomy since publication of the 6th ICTV Report. (MA Mayo)

Continued

Table 1 (continued)

Viruses of prokaryotes

- 140, 1871–1884 Relationships of tailed phages: a survey of protein sequence identity. (H-W Ackermann et al.)
 143, 1852–1853 Bacteriophage PM2: Nomenclature revision. (S Merino et al.)
 143, 2051–2062 Taxonomy of bacterial viruses: Establishment of tailed virus genera and the Order *Caudovirales*. (J Maniloff and H-W Ackermann)

Rules and Statutes

- 118, 299–302 Statutes of the Virology Division of the International Union of Microbiological Societies.
 122, 219–222 Statutes of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses.
 141, 1595–1599 Statutes of the Virology Division of the International Union of Microbiological Societies (as at January 1996).
 143, 1035–1040 The Statutes of the International Committee on Virus Taxonomy (ICTV).

Guidance and general information

- 120, 313–314 The concept of virus species. (MHV van Regenmortel et al.)
 126, 351–353 The ICTVdB project and other initiatives. (CR Pringle)
 134, 213–215 Modifications to the rules for virus nomenclature. (MA Mayo and FA Murphy)
 140, 1337–1341 A listing of virus families and genera with some discriminatory features. (MA Mayo)
 141, 2479–2484 Recent revisions of the rules of virus classification and nomenclature. (MA Mayo)
 141, 392–399 Towards a universal virus database ~ progress in the ICTVDB. (C Buechen-Osmond and M Dallwitz)
 142, 1505–1518 Guidelines to the demarcation of virus species. (M van Regenmortel et al.)
 142, 2115–2120 Revised guidelines for the preparation of family descriptions for the Seventh Report of the International Committee on Virus Taxonomy (ICTV) due to be published in mid-1999. (CM Fauquet and CR Pringle)
 142, 1734–1739 Further progress in ICTVdB, a universal virus database. (C Buechen-Osmond)
 143, 1645–1654 A revised version of the International Code of Virus Classification and Nomenclature. (MA Mayo and MC Horzinek)
 144, 1041–1042 How to write the names of virus species. (MHV Van Regenmortel)
 144, 1249–1273 Abbreviations for plant virus names – 1999. (CM Fauquet and MA Mayo)
 144, 2265–2271 Abbreviations for invertebrate virus species names. (CM Fauquet and CR Pringle)
 144, 1865–1880 Abbreviations for vertebrate virus species names (CM Fauquet and CR Pringle)
 145, 197–203 Abbreviations for bacterial and fungal virus species names. (CM Fauquet and CR Pringle)
 145, 1497–1504 The current composition of ICTV. (MA Mayo and CM Fauquet)

Discussion papers

- 140, 1515–1520 Identification and classification of viruses that have not been propagated. (J Maniloff)
 140, 2093–2099 Sequence analysis and a unifying system of virus taxonomy: consensus via consent. (CH Calisher et al.)
 144, 631–636 Letter to the Editor: The naming of viruses; a call to order. (L Bos)
 144, 209–214 Classification of reverse transcribing elements: A discussion document. (R Hull)
 144, 1463–1466 Editorial – Virus Nomenclature. (CR Pringle)
 145, 427–428 Constructing and writing the names of virus species – an editorial note. (MA Mayo)
 145, 429–432 Structure and typography of virus names. (L Bos)
 145, 433–441 On the relative merits of italics, Latin and binomial nomenclature in virus taxonomy. (MHV van Regenmortel)
 145, 1505–1507 Virus nomenclature descending into chaos. (AJ Gibbs)

Reports

- 119, 303–304 The 20th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the International Committee on Virus Taxonomy. (CR Pringle)
 126, 351–353 The 21st meeting of the Executive Committee of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses. (CR Pringle)

Continued

Table 1 (continued)

133, 491–495	Virus taxonomy update. (CR Pringle)
136, 323–235	Account of the first ICTV Virus Data Sub-Committee workshop on database descriptors, Doorn, January 30th – February 1st, 1994. (MC Horzinek)
138, 406	A new Study Group of the ICTV. (CH Calisher)
139, 445–448	Proceedings of the ICTV Executive Committee meeting, Madison 6–8 July, 1994. (CR Pringle)
140, 391–392	On target: “Virus Taxonomy. Classification and Nomenclature of Viruses – 6th Report of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses” will be published in March 1995 by Springer Verlag, Wien New York. (FA Murphy)
140, 2100–2103	International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses (ICTV): activity report. (CR Pringle)
141, 2251–2256	Virus Taxonomy 1996 – A bulletin from the Xth International Congress of Virology in Jerusalem. (CR Pringle)
142, 1727–1733	Virus Taxonomy 1997 – Proceedings of the 26th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the ICTV, Strasbourg, France, 10–11th May, 1997. (CR Pringle)
142, 1734–1739	Further Progress in ICTVdB, a Universal Virus Database. (C Buechen-Osmond)
143, 203–210	The universal system of virus taxonomy of the International Committee on Virus Taxonomy (ICTV), including new proposals ratified since publication of the Sixth ICTV Report in 1995. (CR Pringle)
143, 1449–1459	Virus taxonomy – San Diego 1998. (CR Pringle)
144, 421–429	Virus taxonomy – 1999. (CR Pringle)
144, 2065–2070	Virus taxonomy at the XIth International Congress of Virology, Sydney, Australia, 1999. (CR Pringle)

However, this is not exclusively so. Articles may be submitted by anyone at any time to the Editor. These will be considered, possibly with solicited opinions from experts within ICTV. It is important to emphasize that this process does not preclude articles critical of ICTV, as for example those recently by Bos [1, 2] and Gibbs [3]. The key requirement is that what is discussed be relevant to the work of ICTV.

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