

Publisher's Note

Virus nomenclature

Each virus should be identified at least once, preferably in the *Introduction* or *Materials and Methods* section, using formal family, genus, and species terms, and where possible by using a precise strain designation term as developed by an internationally recognised specialty group or culture collection. Please note that the word *type* is not used before species designations that include a number. Formal terms used for virus families, genera, and species (viruses), should be those approved by the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses (ICTV): *Virus Taxonomy — The Classification and Nomenclature of Viruses: Sixth Report of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses*. Murphy FA, Fauquet CM, Bishop DHL, Ghabrial SA, Jarvis AW, Martelli GP, Mayo MA, Summers MD. Springer-Verlag, Vienna/New York, 1995. This volume also includes standard abbreviations for species (viruses). Following formal taxonomic identification of viruses, vernacular terms may be used.

Formal taxonomic nomenclature

In formal taxonomic usage, the first letters of virus order, family, sub-family, and genus names are capitalized and the terms are printed in italics. Species designations are not capitalized (unless they are derived from a place name or a host family or genus name), nor are they italicized. In formal usage, the name of the taxon should precede the term for the taxonomic unit; for example: "... the family *Parmyxoviridae*", "...the genus *Morbillivirus*". The following represent examples of full formal taxonomic terminology:

1. Order *Mononegavirales*, Family *Rhabdoviridae*, genus *Lyssavirus*, rabies virus.
2. Family *Poxviridae*, subfamily *Chordopoxvirinae*, genus *Orthopoxvirus*, vaccinia virus.
3. Family *Picornaviridae*, genus *Enterovirus*, poliovirus 1.
4. Family *Bunyaviridae*, genus *Tospovirus*, tomato spotted wilt virus.
5. Genus *Sobemovirus*, southern bean mosaic virus.
6. Family *Totiviridae*, genus *Totivirus*, *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* virus L-A.
7. Family *Tectiviridae*, genus *Tectivirus*, enterobacteria phage PRD 1.
8. Family *Plasmaviridae*, genus *Plasmavirus*, *Acholeplasma* phage L2.

Vernacular taxonomic nomenclature

In informal vernacular usage, virus order, family, subfamily, genus and species names are written in lower case Roman script; they are not capitalized nor are they printed in italics or underlined. In informal usage, the name of the taxon should not include the formal suffix, and the name of the taxon should follow the term for the taxonomic unit; for example, "...the picornavirus family", "...the enterovirus genus".

The use of vernacular terms for virus taxonomic units and virus names should not lead to unnecessary ambiguity or loss of precision in virus identification. The formal family, subfamily, and genus terms and standard ICTV vernacular species terms, rather than any synonyms or transliterations, should be used as the basis for choosing vernacular terms.

One particular source of ambiguity in vernacular nomenclature lies in the common use of the same root terms in formal family and genus names. Imprecision stems from not being able to easily identify in vernacular usage which hierarchical level is being cited. For example, the vernacular name “paramyxovirus” might refer to the family *Paramyxoviridae*, the genus *Paramyxovirus*, or one of the species in the genus *Paramyxovirus*, such as one of the human parainfluenza viruses. The solution in vernacular usage is to avoid “jumping” hierarchical levels and to add taxon identification wherever needed. For example, when citing the taxonomic placement of human parainfluenza virus 1, the term “paramyxovirus” should refer firstly to the genus, not the subfamily or family, and taxon identification should always be added: “human parainfluenza virus 1 is a member of the paramyxovirus genus”, rather than “human parainfluenza virus 1 is a paramyxovirus. Most examples like this exemplify the advantage of switching, where necessary, into formal nomenclature usage: “human parainfluenza virus 1 is a species in the genus *Paramyxovirus*, family *Paramyxoviridae*”. In this example, as is usually the case, adding the information that this virus is also a member of the subfamily *Paramyxovirinae* and the order *Mononegavirales* is unnecessary.