Proposed Rewording of Rule 10C of the Bacteriological Code

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It is proposed that Rule 10C of the Bacteriological Code be reworded slightly to avoid confusion. The name of a subgenus, when included in the name of a species, is indicated by including the abbreviation "subgen." along with the name of the subgenus [example: *Bacillus* (subgen. *Aerobacillus*) *polymyxa*].

Recent correspondence about changes in the nomenclature of the "*Salmonella-Arizona*" group of *Enterobacteriaceae* has pointed out potential confusion that can be caused by a rule in the *International Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria* (1). In 1983, our laboratory discontinued the use of the genus name *Arizona* and classified these organisms in the genus *Salmonella* with the notation "*Salmonella* (*Arizona*) serotype . . ." to indicate that *Arizona* was the name formerly used. Most microbiologists seem to use "the definition of parentheses" in a general grammatical sense. For example, "*Morganella* (*Proteus*) *morganii*" is almost always used to indicate that the genus name being used by the author is *Morganella* but that the genus name *Proteus* has also been used or is in current use for this genus. The genus name in parentheses is meant as an "alternative name," which may be familiar (perhaps, even more familiar) to some readers. Other examples which have recently occurred in print include *Providencia* (*Proteus*) *rettgeri*, *Vibrio* (*Ben-eckea*) *gazogenes*, *Legionella* (*Tatlockia*) *micdadei*, *Tatlockia* (*Legionella*) *micdadei*, and *Gardnerella* (*Haemophilus*) *vaginalis*. Parentheses are almost always used by microbiologists in this general context as a useful means of communicating an alternative genus name. However, there is a rule of the Bacteriological Code which can cause confusion when compared with this usage by microbiologists.

Rule 10C of the Bacteriological Code (p. 14 and 15 of reference 1) states:

The name of the subgenus, when included in the name of a species, is placed in parentheses between the generic name and specific epithet.

Example: *Bacillus* (*Bacillus*) *subtilis*; *Bacillus* (*Aerobacillus*) *polymyxa*.

Thus, when this rule is applied to the example given previously, the interpretation of "*Morganella* (*Proteus*) *morganii*" is that *Morganella* is the genus name and *Proteus* is the subgenus name. Since the concept of subgenus seems to be of little value in microbiology and since normal usage by microbiologists is different from Rule 10C, it seems prudent to reword Rule 10C slightly to avoid this confusion. As provided in Article 8a (p. 142 of reference 1), I request that the Judicial Commission and the International Committee on Systematic Bacteriology consider the following emendation of the Bacteriological Code.

Rule 10C

The name of a subgenus, when included with the name of a species, is placed in parentheses, along with the abbreviation subgen., between the generic name and the specific epithet.

Example: *Bacillus* (subgen. *Bacillus*) *subtilis*; *Bacillus* (subgen. *Aerobacillus*) *polymyxa*.

LITERATURE CITED

1. Lapage, S. P., P. H. A. Sneath, E. F. Lessel, V. B. D. Skerman, H. P. R. Seeliger, and W. A. Clark (ed.). 1975. *International Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria*. 1975 Revision. American Society for Microbiology, Washington, D.C.