Classification and Nomenclature of Viruses

Report prepared by the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses and published for the Virology Section of the International Association of Microbiological Societies (IAMS)

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Contents
Preface  132 (IV)
List of OfScers and Members of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses  133 (V)
President’s Report  137 (1)
The Rules of Nomenclature of Viruses 147 (11)
The Viruses
Presentation 150 (14)
Virus Diagrams 155 (19)
The Families and Groups 159 (23)
Some Unclassified Viruses and Virus-Like Agents 280 (144)
Index of Names 281 (145)

Preface
The main section of this report summarizes the state of approved virus nomenclature and taxonomy as it was following the Plenary meeting of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses (ICTV) at The Hague in September 1978. There are now fifty approved families and groups of viruses. In addition, I have included three proposed or possible families or groups. The data on the viruses, the lists of member viruses, and the literature references have been updated. The information given under the ‘Main characteristics’ section has been substantially expanded. For convenience the data are presented in a standard order under a series of headings. Three pages of outline drawings are included as a visual index to remind the reader of the main morphological features of the various families and groups. I hope that this will increase the value of the report, especially for teachers of virology.

No official names for individual viruses (species) have yet been approved by ICTV. I have included a summary of the problems involved, which I hope will serve as a basis for further discussion among virologists.

I wish to thank all members of the Executive Committee of ICTV for their help and support over the past three years. I thank especially the Secretaries, Dr. J. Maurin and Dr. V. Va-lenta, for their hard work and wise counsel; and the chairmen of subcommittees, Dr. H.-W. Ackermann, Dr. J. Atherton, Dr. R.L.B. Francki, Dr. M. Hollings, Dr. F.A. Murphy, and Dr. T. W. Tinsley. ICTV could not progress without their enthusiasm and their knowledge of both viruses and virologists. The virus descriptions came from the work of many members of Study Groups and their colleagues, too numerous to name; I thank them all most sincerely for their help and their support for the work of ICTV.

For financial support for the meetings of the Executive Committee of ICTV, I wish to thank the World Health Organization, the International Union of Biological Sciences, the International
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Auckland, 1978 R.E.F. Matthews

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