

Edinburgh 2010: The 9th International Mycological Congress Nomenclature Sessions

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■ INTRODUCTION

When initially formed in 1971, the International Mycological Association (IMA) established a Nomenclature Secretariat to address nomenclatural issues of concern to mycologists. This led to a series of proposals on starting points and other matters that were adopted by the XIII International Botanical Congress (IBC) in Sydney, Australia, in 1981, after which the Secretariat was disbanded, its mission accomplished. Nomenclatural discussions at each subsequent International Mycological Congress (IMC) were, for the most part, confined to occasional debates on specified topics. After the Cairns IMC8 roundtable discussion, “Is it time for a Mycological Code of Nomenclature?” in 2006, however, support for a separate fungal Code rapidly mushroomed at subsequent regional mycological meetings. During 2009 and 2010, several proposals that would fundamentally change governance of fungal nomenclature were published that will be voted on by delegates to the XVIII IBC in Melbourne, Australia, in July 2011. Because IBCs occur only every six years and because decisions made there are not enacted until 1–2 years afterwards, issues not decided in 2011 would have to wait until 2018 or 2019 to be implemented. This is one reason why mycologists favor settling controversial nomenclatural matters following the more frequent four-year IMC schedule.

Over 1750 mycologists attended the 9th International Mycological Congress (IMC9) in Edinburgh on August 1–6, 2010, during which three groundbreaking two-hour long Nomenclature Sessions were held on the afternoons of August 3–5. Convener/Rapporteur David Hawksworth (Spain/U.K.), who proposed and planned the Sessions, was assisted at the Congress by Chairman Ron Petersen (U.S.A.), Vice-Chairman Scott Redhead (Canada), Nomenclature Committee for Fungi (NCF) Secretary Lorelei Norvell (U.S.A.), and IBC Nomenclature Section Rapporteur-général John McNeill (U.K.). The attending IMC delegates contributed to the discussions and voted on fungal nomenclatural proposals with the express purpose of forwarding their opinions to the Nomenclature Section of the Melbourne IBC. The printed Nomenclature Programme (distributed to everyone in the official IMC9 tote-bags) permitted delegates who were unable to attend the Nomenclature Sessions to return their marked 25-item questionnaires to Registration so

that all opinions could be counted. As a result, the Edinburgh IMC9 Nomenclature Sessions enabled a broad spectrum of mycologists to express their views on a wide range of topics, vote on already published proposals to amend the *ICBN*, and, most importantly, demonstrate that an IMC can incorporate effective nomenclatural sessions.

■ PROPOSALS AND ISSUES DISCUSSED DURING IMC9

Each Session was devoted to a specific set of proposals or issues. The August 3 Session was devoted to governance of fungal nomenclature. Two introductory presentations – one by NCF Chairman Vincent Demoulin (Belgium) on retaining fungi in the *ICBN* and another by Hawksworth on the progress toward one unified code for all organisms – provided background for the open forum. Most attention was paid to Proposals 016–019, which propose to amend the *ICBN* to clarify that it covers fungal nomenclature and to modify its governance with respect to names of organisms treated as fungi. Also discussed were Proposals 048–051 to exclude *Microsporidia* from the *ICBN*. The session polls showed overwhelming support (with only 1 to 4 negative votes out of 91) for both sets of proposals. Results from all 174 returned paper questionnaires showed that 58% voted that Fungi should not continue to be covered under the *ICBN*, 71% preferred Fungi to be covered under the *ICBN* provided it is renamed the “Botanical and Mycological Code” (Prop. 017), 61% felt that fungi should *not* be covered by a separate mycological Code, and 86% voted that decisions on fungal nomenclature should be made by a Mycological, not Botanical, Congress.

The August 4 Session – devoted to mandatory pre-publication deposit of data on new names in a nomenclatural repository, electronic publication, type cultures, and illustrations – began with a presentation by *Index Fungorum* supervisor Paul Kirk (U.K.), who summarized worldwide progress in data-basing taxonomic names of all organisms. After open discussion, delegates voted on Proposals 117–119 to make pre-publication deposit mandatory for valid publication (again with only 1 to 5 negative votes out of 65 total), while the formal questionnaire tally showed 86% support for mandatory pre-publication

deposition. During this Session, no such clear consensus was shown regarding either valid electronic publication of names or Proposal 138 (to add Rec. 8B.3 to indicate the culture status when a culture is designated as a type), while a final informal poll (4 for, 25 against, and the majority abstaining) indicated a dislike for requiring illustrations for valid publication. Regarding valid electronic publication of new fungal names, the questionnaire showed 84% against unrestricted electronic-only publication but 76% for valid electronic-only publication provided that key nomenclatural information has been deposited in a recognized repository, such as MycoBank.

The final (and by far most lively) August 5 Session focused on two issues: the first whether to move to one name for one fungus and the second on whether to end the Latin requirement for valid publication of names of new taxa. Redhead (Secretary for the Special Committee on Names of Fungi with a Pleomorphic Life Cycle) summarized past and current attempts to modify dual nomenclature after which former CF Secretary Walter Gams (Netherlands) spoke on the limitations of “teleotypifying” fungal names according to Art. 59.7. Emotions of the 145 attending delegates ran high during the open forum and opinions rendered were entertaining, lengthy, and inconclusive, as no Session poll was taken so as to encourage delegates to mark their opinions on their questionnaires. Due to the lengthy “Art. 59” debate, there was little time to discuss whether to end the Latin requirement for valid publication (also to be considered in 2011 at Melbourne). Entrants crowding the doors for the next scheduled mycological session dictated Chair Petersen’s decree for adjournment, which drowned out the plaintive cry from the back of the hall, “Why can’t we vote to abolish Latin?” and several calls from the floor to take a poll on Art. 59.

The questionnaire tally, in fact, confirmed the divided opinion regarding Art. 59, for 51% voted *not* to continue dual nomenclature for anamorphs and teleomorphs via Art. 59 while 66% voted *against* eliminating Art. 59.7. The “Latin” question

delivered slightly more consistent results: 65% voted to end the Latin requirement, 61% favored requiring a diagnosis to be written in either English or Latin, and an overwhelming 97% voted against permitting diagnoses to be written in any language.

■ RESOLUTION APPROVED BY THE IMC9 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The three clear preferences identified from the results of the formal Nomenclature Session questionnaire were presented at the IMC9 closing ceremonies on August 6, where attending delegates approved the following resolution by acclamation:

“This General Assembly of the IMA endorses the decisions of the Nomenclature Session convened during IMC9 with respect to (1) the transference of the governance of the nomenclature of fungi from the International Botanical to International Mycological Congresses, (2) the mandatory pre-publication deposit of nomenclatural information in a recognized depository for the valid publication of new fungal names, (3) the acceptability of English as an alternative to Latin in the valid publication of fungal names, and requests the permanent Nomenclature Committee for Fungi, the special Committee on the names of Pleomorphic Fungi, the International Commission on the Taxonomy of Fungi, and the next International Botanical Congress to take note of the results of the questionnaire completed by delegates of IMC9.”

A more complete summary of the IMC9 Nomenclature Sessions and complete questionnaire results are provided by Norvell & al. (in [Mycotaxon 113: 503–511. 2010](#)).

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