

SELECCIONES



Old and new classification of *Aedes* mosquitoes

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Last year (2004) John F. Reinert *et al* elevated 46 subgenera of aedine mosquitoes, many in the genus *Aedes*, to generic status. The first 2 authors are well-respected mosquito taxonomists while the 3rd is a taxonomist specializing in cladistics. The leading medical entomology journal in the UK, namely Medical and Veterinary Entomology, published a paper by J.M. Medlock *et al* (2005, vol.19, 2-21) in which they recognized as currently valid the names *Stegomyia aegypti* and *Stegomyia albopicta*, thus accepting the new classification of Reinert *et al* (2004). Furthermore, several web sites began using the new classification of the aedine mosquitoes.

As a consequence of the above, in a ProMED-mail post of 17 Mar 2005, I said that despite the fact that taxonomic name changes always caused confusion, I nevertheless believed ProMED should fall in line and adopt the new classification of Reinert *et al* (2004).

However, since then there has been much vigorous debate on the practical consequences of such name changes and challenges to the validity of the cladistics used in the Reinert *et al* paper. After discussions with many mosquito experts, including taxonomists and editors of medical entomology journals, I have agreed to accept the consensus of their deliberations. That is, more research and interpretation of the Reinert *et al* (2004) paper is needed, but in the meantime we should encourage use of the older classification and so maintain usage of the traditional names.

Thus, ProMED favors using the older and more familiar names such as *Aedes aegypti*, but if a contributor really wishes to adopt the new classification, then the older name must be placed in parentheses after the 1st use of each new name. For example, *Stegomyia aegypti* (= *Aedes aegypti*, see Reinert *et al* 2004). To add to these problems, an earlier publication (Reinert 2000) raised the subgenus *Ochlerotatus* of the genus *Aedes* to generic status. This change was widely accepted, albeit somewhat grudgingly by some, and has been used in publications worldwide over the last 4 years. But the present proposal to return to the older classification means we need to return *Ochlerotatus* to subgeneric level, so for example it is no longer *Ochlerotatus triseriatus* but once again *Aedes triseriatus*.

We are much indebted to John D. Edman, editor of the Journal of Medical Entomology, for trying to get us all to agree on a strategy of promoting the use of the older classification. I understand that many journals including the Journal of Medical Entomology, the American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, Annals of Tropical Medicine and Parasitology, Emerging Infectious Diseases, Journal of the American Mosquito Control Association, Journal of Vector Ecology, Medical and Veterinary Entomology, Vector-Borne and Zoonotic Diseases will adopt the above strategy of promoting use of the older classification.

References

1. Reinert J. F. (2000). New classification for the composite genus *Aedes* (Diptera: Culicidae: Aedini), elevation of subgenus *Ochlerotatus* to generic rank, reclassification of the other subgenera, and notes on certain subgenera and species. J Am Mosq Control Assoc 2000;16: 175-188.
2. Reinert JF, Harbach RE, Kitching IJ. Phylogeny and classification of *Aedini* (Diptera: Culicidae), based on morphological characters of all life stages. Zool J Linnean Soc 2004; 142: 289-368.