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DEPARTMENT OF MICROBIOLOGY

TELEPHONE: (213) 226-2142

March 11, 1975

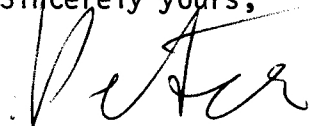
Dr. Harold Varmus  
Department of Microbiology  
University of California  
School of Medicine  
San Francisco, California 94122

Dear Harold:

I am sending you the draft of a virus characterization prepared for the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses. The data, compiled by the RNA Tumor Virus Study Group of the ICTV, pertain to enveloped RNA viruses of vertebrates which replicate through a DNA provirus. The data sheets follow standard ICTV format. As chairman of the RNA Tumor Virus Study Group within the ICTV, I would appreciate receiving your comments and criticisms on this document before I submit it to the Vertebrate Virus Subcommittee of the ICTV in April. I would be particularly interested in your reaction to the proposed nomenclature and taxonomic structure. My feeling is that a majority of workers in the field are in favor of the term retravirus as a family name including not only RNA tumor viruses but also foamy agents and slow viruses like visna. There also seems to be some sentiment in favor of oncornavirus to designate the genera of RNA tumor viruses. However, there are many workers who for some reason dislike these names -- oncorna also violates the ICTV rule that names made up of abbreviations may not be used -- and now is the last chance to make a better and perhaps a successful counterproposal. The ICTV will meet on the occasion of the International Congress of Virology in Madrid, September 9 - 17, 1975 and will vote on proposals of virus nomenclature and taxonomy. There will also be an open session on this subject organized by the ICTV in Madrid. An announcement about these meetings may be found in the December 1974 issue of *Virology*.

With all good wishes.

Sincerely yours,



Peter K. Vogt

PKV:mdz

Enclosures

2. Dr. Harold Varmus  
March 11, 1975

P.S. Harold, I would be very grateful for your reaction to nomenclature and virus terms. Do you think retraviruses and oncornaviruses are now unavoidable? Is the proposed taxonomic status of RNA tumor viruses (that of genus) sufficient or should it be a family? Have I omitted any important data on B-type viruses?

I am  
also  
enclosing  
a  
letter  
from  
L. Wolff