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EDITORIAL

Gynecological endocrinology: a reflexion on its etymology

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The name of most specialities, like endocrinology or gynecology, has been adopted without thinking on their etymology.

To make a long story short, I think that 'Gynecological Endocrinology' should instead be, at least, *Gynecological Endocrinatry*! Why?

The suffix '-logy' means only the *science* of or the *knowledge* of, but not the *treatment* of.

The suffix '-atry' is the one that means *treatment* of, like in psychiatry (different from psychology) or geriatry (different from gerontology).

Therefore, instead of *Gynecological Endocrinology*, the best designation should be *Gynecoendocrinatry*, because *gyneco* refers already to a gender (female). 'Gynecological' would mean again a reference to the knowledge of the female gender, whereas *gyneco* is in itself already an attribute to characterise the endocrinatry of the woman.

Many other specialities are, as well, improperly designated in the light of etymology.

Thus,

- Cardiology should be *Cardiatry*
- Nephrology should be *Nefriatry*
- Rheumatology should be *Reumatry*

But in Rheumatology the problem seems even greater, because this speciality is devoted not only to the treatment of rheumatism but also of bone diseases, like osteoporosis. Because the bone is the main component, it should be designated by *osteatry*. Osteology should be the study of the bone (morphologically and functionally).

Coming back to Gynecology, that should mean only the science or knowledge of the woman, but not her treatment, I realise that nobody will change to an etymologically more correct designation. Therefore, lacking another Greek radical to substitute for *gyneco* – I decided to use the latin *femina* – and made *feminology* to mean the knowledge, not the treatment, of the female gender. I added *holistic* because the WHO defined Health, holistically, as a condition of physical, psycho and social wellbeing and not only the absence of disease.

Therefore, with resignation, I must accept Gynaecology (that should be gynecatry) and *Holistic Feminology* that is the real meaning of gynecology. May be one day I shall call myself gynecologist–gynecatrist!

Another incoming word is *geripause*, proposed by Eskin BA, that is supposed to mean the beginning of old age, after the late menopause. I rejected this word (in *NAMS Menopause Management* 2008;7(4):8) because it means death! *Geripause* is no more than the end of old age! Therefore, I proposed, instead, similarly to menarche, the word *geriarche* which means the beginning of old age. This is a name we should start using, rejecting geripause.

I am sure that this reflection will not change anything for the moment being. May be someday, one will see the birth of a Society of Ginecatry Who knows?

The purpose of this reflection is to invite my readers to think about the need to use as precise as possible designations for the words we use in Medicine.