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PO-054 - (23888) - PRODUCING AMBIGUITY: PROBLEMS REGARDING THE USE OF “-GENIC” AND “-GENOUS” IN MEDICAL LANGUAGE

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The language of clinical medicine is a field that has no room for ambiguity and requires utmost precision. The suffixes -genic and -genous are often used interchangeably in medicine, despite once having clear, opposite meanings (-genic should mean the active “producing/causing” and -genous should mean the passive “produced/caused by”). This reckless mix of the two forms can be detrimental since it can result in misinterpretations of medical conditions, which can lead to incorrect diagnoses and inappropriate treatments.

We conducted a thorough search of the 33rd edition of *Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary* to compile a list of current medical terms that use -genic and -genous in order to discover how many terms followed the expected pattern, and how many did not. We next categorized the terms based on inconsistent definitions that distort their intended use and then compared the terms to those in the *Oxford Dictionary* in order to see the relationship between medical and non-medical uses of -genic and -genous.

The popular terminations -genic and -genous are currently used interchangeably and recklessly, and all people, especially those in the medical field, should be aware of this.

Establishing clarity within the language of clinical medicine is necessary to ensure consistency and help reduce the risk of any misunderstanding or errors in patient care. Thus there is a need for everyone in the world of medicine to be aware of the problematic use of -genic and -genous. Perhaps these terms should be redefined or even replaced?

Palavras-chave : terminology, clinical, medicine