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ISBT Working Party on Terminology for Red Cell Surface Antigens

Preliminary Report

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This group was organized by Dr. *B. P. L. Moore,* and met at the Montreal International Congress of the ISBT in 1980. The group considered first the guidelines published by *T. B. Shows's* committee [1] on human gene nomenclature. This committee had been authorized by the Winnipeg Conference (1977) of the International Workshop on Human Gene Mapping. It was generally agreed to accept the recommendation that only capital letters of the Latin alphabet should be used, that all superscripts and subscripts should be eliminated, and that an asterisk should be used to indicate a gene or haplotype (e.g. Rh* 1, 2, 5 means the gene $\underline{R}^1$), thus eliminating the necessity for italics or underlining. The Montreal group decided not to give up the use of a colon to indicate a phenotype (e.g. Rh:1 means Rh-positive). It also decided to retain the use of commas to separate specificities in phenotypes and genotypes instead of using hyphens, and to continue to use the plus and the minus signs to indicate positive and negative.

The principal force in organizing this Working Party was The ISBT Working Party on Automation and Data Processing, hence the high priority on eliminating superscripts and subscripts. Another high priority was the assignment of numbers for each of the blood-group specificities: these were not intended to replace the current names but to make standard alternatives when numbers are needed, as is the case with many computers. Subcommittees were appointed to deal with the various blood-group systems.

A second meeting of the Working Party was held in New York City on October 29, 1981 at the time of the 3rd Meeting of the ISBT Working Party on Automation and Data Processing. Numbers were agreed upon for the ABO system. The Lewis, MN, Kidd, Dombrock and Bg systems were also discussed. *Eric Brodheim* showed the group a bar-code system for identifying blood-group specificities that is being used by a blood centre in England. The numbers they

Table I. Numerical designations for certain blood-group specificities[1]

System names			Number within system				
	alphabetical	numerical	001	002	003	004	005
ABO	AB	001	A	B	A, B	A1	H
Rh	RH	004	D	C	E	c	e
Kell	KEL	006	K	k			
Duffy	FY	008	Fy^a	Fy^b			
Kidd	JK	009	Jk^a	Jk^b			
Lewis	LE	007	Le^a	Le^b			
MN	MNS	002	M	N	S	s	U
P	P1	003	P1	P	P^k		
Lutheran	LU	005	Lu^a	Lu^b			

Since each system required a numerical designation, the system numbers were chosen on the basis of historical sequence.

[1] Please note that the ISBT Working Party is not trying to change the nomenclature of the blood groups. Numbers assigned to specificities are proposed as standard alternatives to the current alphabetical names in those circumstances where numbers are necessary, as in some computer programs.

had chosen to represent the specificities were all unique, but none of them corresponded to numbers that the Working Party had been considering. Dr. *Brodheim* urged that the Working Party publish, with the least possible delay, its recommendation of numbers that could be used for the specificities most important in transfusion technology. Table I was agreed upon by the Working Party.

The third meeting of the ISBT Working Party on Nomenclature for Red Cell Surface Antigens will be held in Budapest at the time of the 1982 meeting of the ISBT. Anyone who wants to contribute ideas or to voice objections should do so by writing to anyone on the committee.

References

1 Shows, T.B.; Alper, C.A.; Bootsma, D., et al.: International system for human gene nomenclature (1979). Cytogenet. Cell Genet. *25:* 96–116 (1979).