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## BULGARIAN MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY UNITS DERIVED FROM A TOPONYM

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### БЪЛГАРСКИ МЕДИЦИНСКИ ТЕРМИНОЛОГИЧНИ ЕДИНИЦИ, ОБРАЗУВАНИ ОТ ТОПОНИМ<sup>1</sup>

Eponyms play an important role in the terminology system of every language. In the sphere of medicine, they emerged for the first time in the 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> century. Clinical eponyms came into view a little later, in 19<sup>th</sup> century, but their number is permanently increasing.

The present research focuses on Bulgarian eponyms derived from a toponym in the field of medicine and the knowledge domain connected with it.

In order to classify these eponyms, they are divided into several major groups in accordance with the basic toponym for their coining, the thematic category for their sphere of usage, and the principles of their formation.

Eponyms are still an interesting linguistic area for scholarly investigation due to their universal use as terms. That is why discussions about their formation and classification are of great importance.

**Keywords:** *eponym; toponym; Bulgarian medical terminology.*

Епонимите заемат важна роля в терминологичната система на всеки език. В сферата на медицината, те се появяват за първи път през 16 – 17 век. Клиничните епоними възникват малко по-късно, през 19 век, но броят им непрекъснато нараства.

Настоящото изследване е фокусирано върху българските епоними, образувани от топоним, в областта на медицината и свързаните с нея области на знанието. За да се класифицират тези епоними, те са разделени на няколко основни групи в съответствие с основния топоним за образуването им, тематичната категория за сферата на тяхната употреба и принципите на формирането им.

Епонимите продължават да бъдат интересна лингвистична област за научно изследване поради универсалната им употреба като термини. Ето защо дискусиите за тяхното формиране и класификацията им са от голямо значение.

**Ключови думи:** *епоним; топоним; българска медицинска терминология.*

### Introduction

Eponyms play an important role in the terminology system of every language. In the sphere of medicine, they emerged for the first time in the 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> century. Clinical eponyms came into view a little while later, in 19<sup>th</sup> century, but their number is permanently increasing (Тошева, Димитрова, Младенова, Кънчева 2000: 323).

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<sup>1</sup> Авторката иказва своята благодарност към Национална научна програма „Електронно здравеопазване в България“ (е-здраве)

As part of the medical terminological system, an eponym may be generally defined as a structure, a disease, a syndrome, a physical sign, a procedure, an operation, or a test derived from a proper name (Fortuine 2000: 236).

In most cases, eponyms are connected with the name of the researcher who was the first person to describe a new disease, symptom, method, etc. from a scientific point of view, and they usually express the meaning “*found by...*”, “*created by...*” (Tosheva 2004: 40). Nevertheless, there are some eponyms, though not as numerous as the previously mentioned ones, that are derived from the name of the place where a new disease appeared for the first time the name of the first patient who became sick of a new illness or the name of a character from mythology, history, or world literature that was somehow linked with the symptoms of the illness or the patient’s appearance and status.

Century after century, more and more diseases appear, and more and more eponyms emerge with them. At present, there are more than 20 000 medical eponyms, which makes it difficult for the contemporary physician to know them all and make use of them. Thus, special eponymic textbooks have been written and the knowledge and ability to use several thousand eponyms is a compulsory part of medical education in the USA (Арнаудова 2005: xvi – xviii)<sup>2</sup>.

Being part of the medical terminology, eponyms do not only have lexical meaning but historical, too – they honour the person after whom a given term is named (Arnaudova 2005: xvi – xviii) and form the lexical layer of basic terms (Арнаудова 2005: iii). Thus, their correct spelling and pronunciation are also obligatory for every specialist (Арнаудова 2013: 10; Arnaudova 2005: xvi – xviii). New patterns and structure models are replacing those used in the recent past (for example, variants in Bulgarian without the preposition „на“, which has the meaning of possession, like *Бехчет синдром* instead of *синдром на Бехчет*, are accepted as contemporary and correct) (Арнаудова 2013: 10). That is why special attention should be paid to eponyms from a linguistic point of view and the principles of their formation should also be determined.

The present research focuses on Bulgarian eponyms derived from a toponym in the field of medicine and the knowledge domain connected with it. The main sources of excerption are *Nova Terminologia Medica Polyglota et Eponymica (New Medical and Eponymic Terminology in Seven Languages)*, *Малка медицинска енциклопедия за всеки* by Petya Georgi Arnaudova, and *English Topic Medical Dictionary in 6 Languages. Part 1 (Cardio-vascular system)* by Canna Dimitrova, Jana Delipavlova-Mladenova, Petrana Kancheva, Aneta Tosheva, and Stefan Sivkov.

In order to classify these eponyms, they are divided into several major groups in accordance with the basic toponym for their coining, the thematic category for their sphere of usage, and the principles of their formation.

### **Classifications of the Bulgarian medical eponyms derived from a toponym**

#### **I. Classification according to the type of the basic toponym:**

##### **1. Eponyms named after a geographical region (peninsula, island, valley):**

– eponym from a toponym for a peninsula: *балканска нефропатия* (< the Balkan peninsula), *кримска треска* (< the Crimean Peninsula);

– eponym from a toponym for an island: *борнхолмска болест* (< Bornholm);

– eponym from a toponym for a geographical region: *Бунявириде* (< Bunyamwere);

– eponym from a toponym for a bay: *болест на Минамата* (< Minamata Bay).

##### **2. Eponyms named after an oikonym (a city, town, village) and an administrative region or a state:**

– eponym from a toponym for a state: *австралийски антиген* (< Australia), *български лактобацил*, *българско лечение* (< Bulgaria);

– eponym from a toponym for a city/ town/ village: *лаймски артрит*, *лаймска болест* (< Old Lyme), *коксаки-вируси* (< Coxsackie), *хаверхилска треска* (< Haverhill), *Глазгоу-скала на комата* (< Glasgow), *марбургска хеморагична треска*, *марбургски вирус* (< Marburg), *меджугорска маку-*

<sup>2</sup> There are sources of information in Bulgaria that are similar in content – „Малка медицинска енциклопедия за всеки (*A Short Medical Encyclopedia for Everybody*)“ and „Епонимни термини в нозологията, морфологията и клиниката на вътрешните болести (*Eponyms in Nosology, Morphology, and Internal Diseases Clinics*)“ by Petya Georgi Arnaudova.

*лопатия* (< Medjugorje), *стокхолмски синдром* (< Stockholm), *мезербургска триада* (< Merseburg), *туларемия* (< Tulare);

– eponym from a toponym for an administrative region: *филадельфийска хромозома* (< Philadelphia).

3. Eponyms named after a hydronym (sea, river, mineral springs and places belonging to them):

– eponym from a toponym for mineral springs and places belonging to them: *вода Зелтцер*, *аква-зелцер* (< Selters), *наухаймска баня*, *наухаймско лечение* (< Bad-Nauheim), *зайдлицов прах* (< Seidlitz, mineral springs in Bohemia);

– eponym from a toponym for a river: *Ебола-вирус*, *ебола хеморагична треска* (< Ebola);

– eponym from a toponym for a sea: *Средиземноморска семейна треска* (< The Mediterranean);

– eponym from a toponym for a lagoon: *Хаф-болест* (Königsberg Haff / Frisches Haff);

4. Eponyms named after an urbanonym (buildings): *бромптънски коктейл* (< Brompton Chest Hospital), *чиба-игла* (< Chiba University), *обуховски признак* (< Obuchovskaya boljnitsa).

There is always a logical connection between an eponym and the onym, from which it is derived, and that is significant because the eponym often designates the scientific field of its use. Sometimes the etymological link has faded away; in such cases, additional extralinguistic facts need to be provided such as the information presented above (Петкова 2010: 298).

## II. Thematic classification:

Eponyms for names of diseases, symptoms, or malformations:

– *балканска нефропатия*; *болест на Минамата*; *борнхолмска болест*; *Бунявириде*; *Ебола-вирус*, *ебола хеморагична треска*; *коксаки-вируси*; *кримска треска*; *лаймски артрит*, *лаймска болест*; *марбургска хеморагична треска*, *марбургски вирус*; *меджугорска макулопатия*; *обуховски признак*; *Средиземноморска семейна треска*; *стокхолмски синдром*; *туларемия*; *хаверхилска треска*; *Хаф-болест*;

– Eponyms for methods, sources, instruments, and medicines for health recovery and prevention: *аква-зелцер*, *вода Зелтцер*; *бромптънски коктейл*; *българско лечение*; *зайдлицов прах*; *мерзебургска триада*; *наухаймска баня*, *наухаймско лечение*; *чиба-игла*;

Others:

– *австралийски антиген*; *български лактобацил*; *Глазгоу-скала на комата*; *филадельфийска хромозома*.

It is obvious from the first two classifications presented above that the logical link between the eponyms included in the research and the toponym used for their derivation is due to one of the following facts: the new disease was localized in that venue<sup>3</sup>, its symptoms were observed there for the first time, a new method or remedy was found in that place, or the natural resources of the area are favourable to health recovery.

## III. Classification according to the principles of formation:

Monobasic terms:

1. *Бунявириде*, *туларемия*;

2. Compound terms:

– Noun + noun/ nouns:

*аква-зелцер*, *болест на Минамата*, *вода Зелтцер*, *Глазгоу-скала на комата*, *Ебола-вирус*, *коксаки-вируси*, *чиба-игла*, *Хаф-болест*;

– Noun + adjective/ adjectives:

*австралийски антиген*, *балканска нефропатия*, *борнхолмска болест*, *бромптънски коктейл*, *български лактобацил*, *българско лечение*, *зайдлицов прах*, *кримска треска*, *лаймски артрит*, *лаймска болест*, *марбургски вирус*, *марбургска хеморагична треска*, *меджугорска макулопатия*, *мерзебургска триада*, *наухаймска баня*, *наухаймско лечение*, *обуховски признак*, *Средиземноморска семейна треска*, *стокхолмски синдром*, *филадельфийска хромозома*, *хаверхилска треска*;

<sup>3</sup> The types of diseases included in the research vary from intoxication (*болест на Минамата*, *Хаф-болест*), to viral infection (*борнхолмска болест*, *ебола хеморагична треска*, *хаверхилска треска*), genetic disease (*Средиземноморска семейна треска*), a case of trauma (*меджугорска макулопатия*), and mental disturbance (*стокхолмски синдром*).

– Noun + adjective + noun:

*ебола хеморагична треска*

The first group of the excerpted monobasic medical terms covers eponyms formed by the means of conversion. This is the easiest and usually preferred pattern (Петкова 2010: 298; Petkova 2011a: 31)) because in that case the etymological link between the proper name and the term formed by it remains clear, visible, and understandable (Петкова 2014: 321).

The most numerous examples in Bulgarian are those where the toponym is represented by an adjective formed with the suffix *-ски/ -ска/ -ско* (with only one exception formed with the suffix *-ов*<sup>4</sup> – *зайдлицов прах*). According to specialists, that way of expression causes fewer mistakes as they are more descriptive (Арнаудова 2005: xii-xiii). When the eponym is a combination between a common and a proper noun, i.e. a toponym, the last one is just transliterated in Cyrillic.

There is another pattern used with the following structure: a medical term followed by the possessive preposition „на“ and the proper name. However, as was already mentioned above, nowadays another variant is preferred – a proper noun followed by a medical term. Among the reasons for the occurrence of such changes in the syntax of eponyms is that the usage of „на“ may cause misunderstandings so it is better to focus the attention on the proper noun as a marker (Арнаудова 2005: xii).

No rules are followed about the usage of capital and small initial letters – both variations are observed.

It is evident that the different patterns of the specified term formation have a different degree of productiveness; nevertheless, the largest part of the terms is presented by descriptive collocations. This type of nomination depends on the aspiration for clear and obvious inner form of the term and unequivocal characterization of the notion (Зидарова 1998: 112).

Synonymy is another interesting fact about terms in general; there are pairs of synonyms such as *борнхолмска болест = епидемична плевродиния*, *Средиземноморска семейна треска = семеен рецидивирац полисерозит*, and others.

Synonymy can be observed between lexemes, between a lexeme and a phraseological unit, and between phraseological units (Зидарова 1998: 66). In this way, the same structure, sign, or disease may appear in the form of a different local term in different countries in order to show national pride or due to the priority of discovery (Арнаудова 2005: ix; Fortuine 2000: 236).

On the one hand, synonymy of terms may become a problem in the act of communication, because it obstructs the possibility for a concrete and identical nomination in the field of science. On the other hand, it helps different variants to appear (Зидарова 1998: 113), and these different forms may also express different opinions about one and the same phenomenon (*Теория и методика ономастических исследований* 1986: 34).

## Conclusions

The use of the researched eponyms was completely normal and widespread in the past but today these eponyms may be considered offending, their usage may affect economic interests, and there are even registered cases when it was claimed that eponyms provoked stigmatization and xenophobia. That forced the World Health Organization (WHO) to announce some changes like the following: “disease names may not include “geographic location”, “people’s names”, “species/class of animal or food”, “cultural, population, industry or occupational references” or “terms that incite undue fear” (Felecan 2021: 43)”.

More and more researchers advise avoiding the use of eponyms because of the instances of misunderstanding; as a result, scientists are beginning to focus mainly on their negative influence (Гапарин, Гаранина 2019: 111). This is especially relevant for eponyms derived from a toponym.

Notwithstanding the tendency to refrain from using the eponyms described above in official scientific sources, these eponyms are still very popular in mass media (for example, Wuhan/ China/

<sup>4</sup> Usage of the suffix *-ов, -ова, -ово* in Bulgarian expresses possession. The other way to express the same semantic meaning is by the following construction: common noun + *на* + proper noun, i. e. *болест на Минамата* (Petkova 2011b: 40).

Chinese virus and Wuhan/ China/ Chinese coronavirus instead of COVID-19) (Felecan 2021: 44) and even among medical specialists due to their conciseness and exactness of meaning that is necessary during the working process (Zheleva, Petrova 2021: 28).

To summarize, eponyms are an interesting linguistic area of scientific investigation because of their universal usage as terms, which leads to the appearance of more and more new units. From one and the same proper name there may be derived terms for a given disease, its symptoms and signs, the pathogenic virus or bacteria that causes it, etc. Though rare, there are examples of eponymic terms evoking the feeling of pride in inventing a method of curing a disease.

The pandemic situation caused by COVID-19 is the latest example of how narrow the limits are between medical terms and other social areas and scientific fields of knowledge.

#### **Index of eponyms, part of medical terminology, derived from a toponym:**

- австралийски антиген* (< Australia) (Terminologia Medica Polyglota = TMP);  
*аква-зелцер* (< Selters, mineral springs in Prusia, Germany) (TMP);  
*балканска нефропатия* (< Balkan peninsula) (TMP);  
*болест на Минамата* (< Minamata Bay, Kyushu Island, Japan) (TMP);  
*борнхолмска болест* (= епидемична плевродиния) (< Bornholm, an island in the Baltic Sea, in the border between Denmark and Sweden) (Малка медицинска енциклопедия = ММЕ);  
*бромптънски коктейл* (< Brompton Chest Hospital, London, England) (TMP);  
*Бунавириде* (< Bunyamwere, a region in Uganda) (TMP);  
*български лактобацил* (< Bulgaria) (TMP);  
*българско лечение* (< Bulgaria) (TMP);  
*вода Зелтцер* (< Selters, mineral springs in Prusia, Germany) (TMP);  
*Глазгоу-скала на комата* (< Glasgow, Scotland) (TMP);  
*Ебола-вирус* (< Ebola, a river in the Democratic Republic of Congo) (TMP);  
*ебола хеморагична треска* (< Ebola, a river in the Democratic Republic of Congo) (TMP);  
*зайдлицов прах* (< Seidlitz, mineral springs in Bohemia) (TMP);  
*коксаки-вируси* (< Coxsackie, town in New York state, USA) (TMP);  
*кримска треска* (< the Crimean Peninsula, lying between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov) (TMP);  
*лаймски артрит* (< Old Lyme, a town in Connecticut, USA) (TMP);  
*лаймска болест* (< Old Lyme, a town in Connecticut, USA) (TMP);  
*марбургска хеморагична треска* (< Marburg, a town in Germany) (TMP);  
*марбургски вирус* (< Marburg, a town in Germany) (TMP);  
*меджугорска макулопатия* (< Medjugorje, a village in Serbia) (TMP);  
*мерзебургска триада* (< Merseburg, Germany) (TMP);  
*наухаймска баня* (< Bad-Nauheim, town and balneological resort in Hesse-Darmstadt, Germany) (TMP);  
*наухаймско лечение* (< Bad-Nauheim, town and balneological resort in Hesse-Darmstadt, Germany) (TMP);  
*обуховски признак* (< Obuchovskaya boljnitsa, the oldest hospital in St. Petersburg, Russia) (TMP);  
*Средиземноморска семейна треска* (= семеен рецидивиращ полисерозит) (< The Mediterranean) (TMP);  
*стокхолмски синдром* (< Stockholm, Sweden) (TMP);  
*туларемия* (< Tulare, region in California, USA) (TMP);  
*чиба-игла* (< Chiba University, Japan) (TMP);  
*филадельфийска хромозома* (< Philadelphia, USA) (TMP);  
*хаверхилска треска* (< Haverhill, town and region in Massachusetts, USA) (TMP);  
*Хаф-болест* (< Königsberg Haff / Frisches Haff, a lagoon connected with the Baltic Sea) (TMP).

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