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A CLASSIFICATION  
*for*  
MEDICAL LITERATURE

*Compiled by*

EILEEN R. CUNNINGHAM

*Librarian*

Vanderbilt University School of Medicine



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Second Edition

Revised and Enlarged

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1937  
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NASHVILLE, TENN.

TO  
ROBERT SYDNEY CUNNINGHAM

In grateful acknowledgment  
of his  
unfailing encouragement  
and  
cooperation in my work.

## PREFACE TO THE REVISED EDITION

In the revised edition of this work, it seemed advisable to change the arrangement from the "Kardex visible" form in which the first edition appeared to book form. While the Kardex form had certain advantages in regard to rapid consultation, these advantages were not thought sufficient to compensate for the greater convenience of the less bulky and more compact book form which can be issued at a considerable reduction in price.

No radical changes have been made in the general scheme of the classification, so that those who are already using it for a collection of medical literature will have no reason to make extensive changes. Certain subjects have been expanded to take care of modern developments, and the text has been carefully corrected throughout. The most important change is the addition of an extensive alphabetical index. This index should prove of aid in the rapid use of the classification. Every attempt has been made to eliminate "see references" in the index, the proper classification number having been given under synonymous terms as well as under the term used in the text, in order to eliminate looking in two places for the proper citation.

I wish to gratefully acknowledge the invaluable assistance of Mrs. Dorinda H. Knopp of the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine Library in the revision of the text and the compilation of the index. I also wish to express my appreciation to Miss Florence Hayes and Mrs. Dorothy Cantrell of the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine Library for their painstaking work in eliminating errors and assistance in preparing the final manuscript.

March, 1937.

# A CLASSIFICATION FOR MEDICAL LITERATURE

## PREFACE

The original concept resulting in this classification of medical literature was evolved some ten years ago for the filing of a large collection of reprints under circumstances where cross-indexing was an item of considerable importance. Since then it has been elaborated and enlarged as the result of adaptation to other collections of medical literature of various kinds and was finally arranged in its present form for use in the library of the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine.

The Index Catalogue of the Surgeon-General's Library, the medical sections of the Dewey Classification, the Index Medicus, the Cumulative Index, The Library of Congress Classification and the Boston Library Medical Classification have been carefully studied during the compilation of this system and they have been of the greatest assistance in controlling its scope.

The primary purpose for which this classification was designed has not been abandoned in its adaptation to library purposes; and therefore every effort has been made to combine a logical scientific arrangement of medical material with the brevity and sequence so helpful in arranging and marking books.

The grouping of subjects has been as follows: first the biological sciences, next the organic systems of the body, and then pathological and clinical subjects. All subjects likely to be of importance in medical libraries but not dealing directly with work in medicine including history, biography, general reference works etc. are grouped in an appendix. The biological sciences have been worked out fairly elaborately so that they can be used for departmental libraries related to, or specializing in, these subjects. General chemistry is included with biological chemistry because it is felt that the relationship of chemistry to the biological sciences is proving of importance and should be particularly stressed. The systems are arranged and grouped so that those organs which are more specifically related to each other are adjacent. The order followed in the pathological and clinical section is a new one but is based on a careful consideration of the relative relationships of the different special groups. It has

seemed particularly important to call attention to the close relationship existing between public health, hygiene and preventive medicine and bacteriology and parasitology; and in a similar manner that existing between clinical medicine and pediatrics. The whole arrangement has been worked out with regard to progress in the science of medicine and its related subjects as well as from a library viewpoint. Headings have been arranged for work in the newer fields of the biological and medical sciences; for example, tissue culture, vital staining, oxydase reactions, phagocytosis and hypersensitivity.

Nothing has been left under any general heading that could possibly be arranged under a specific heading and the individual using the classification should follow this principle in grouping the material under the various headings. Subjects have been grouped under a general heading wherever it was felt that they were sufficiently related or that they would be taken up together in systems and texts, thus affording a place for the filing of combined works.

Great care has been taken in the working out of sub-headings. It was felt that an arrangement whereby sub-divisions fall in their logical position in relation to the other divisions is particularly essential in order to permit of sufficient elasticity for almost indefinite expansion at any point in the classification. It is, of course, very desirable to keep the numbering as simple as possible and we feel that both objectives have been accomplished in this system.

A capital letter has been assigned to each general division and the next sub-division is indicated by a numeral, this division is sub-divided in turn by the addition of a second letter (lower case), and this again sub-divided by the addition of a numeral. By this method a sub-division of the fourth place would still have a comparatively simple number, e.g. A2a2 and longer numbers will practically never become necessary in library use, though with this arrangement they can be used if desired.

In the sections containing the systems of organs of the body, the arrangement has on the whole been uniform. First a general heading for the whole system, then morphology including anatomy, histology and embryology, next physiology including chemistry, and finally pathology including diseases, abnormalities and injuries; following this general section each individual unit of the system is taken up in logical sequence and sub-divided in the same way. The advantage of such an arrangement is easily seen because the classification can be adapted to the needs of the material at hand and decision made as to whether it will require the use of sub-headings beyond the three major divisions of morphology, physiology and pathology in any given group, and yet if future expansion of any particular unit should occur after the material has been classified it can easily be taken care of by the simple expedient of adding the additional letter or numeral to the number already on the book without changing the rest of the numbers or in any way affecting the rest of the headings, and with but little change in the arrangement

of the books on the shelves within the particular group undergoing revision. The sub-headings not in use for filing serve as valuable guides to the nature of the material to be filed under the preceding major heading and therefore many sub-headings have been put in their correct positions but without numbers, the numbering to be supplied by the individual using the system as need for them arises in the filing of material. It is also obvious that many more such descriptive sub-headings may be added by any one desiring to expand any specific section of the classification. In a few instances this sub-head arrangement has been sacrificed to retain the short numbers but in these cases the arrangement has always been a logical sequence following the major heading under which they would fall in sub-head arrangement, and the major heading is followed by the word "general".

Under "pathology", diseases specific to an organ or system of organs are filed under that organ, e.g., nephritis under pathology of the kidney, while tuberculosis, which affects many organs, is filed in its logical position in the section on clinical medicine. The grouping of the specific diseases which affect more than one organ has been based on etiology.

An attempt has been made to afford, wherever possible, only one logical place for the filing of a given group of material, as experience has shown how bewildering it is to be confronted with a classification so complex as to offer five to ten places under which it might be possible to classify a book or reprint. Such multiplicity of choice is apt to cause

the scattering of related material and error and confusion in filing by different individuals, or even by the same individual at different times. Where it was felt that confusion might arise indications have been made in italics referring to related subjects, not to be found in that section, but included elsewhere in other divisions of the classification; these however have been reduced to a minimum. In a few instances an arbitrary decision on the part of the individual using the classification will be necessary, owing to the fact that certain unrelated topics are still taken up together, e.g., diseases of the skin and venereal diseases and texts on eye, ear, nose and throat. Such material should be filed under some one place and the decision recorded for future reference.

No index has been thought necessary because the adoption of the "Kardex" holder, instead of pamphlet form, renders the various major headings visible as a unit. The advantage of the arrangement on "Kardex" is further obvious in that a given section can be revised and expanded at any time without necessitating the reprinting of the other sections or disturbing their arrangement.

I wish to extend my thanks to the Faculty of the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine for their unfailing kindness, cooperation and advice in working up the various subjects included in this classification. The system is in use at present in the Vanderbilt University Medical Library.

EILEEN R. CUNNINGHAM.

Nashville, Tenn., 1929



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