

## Dissincronia or dessincronia?

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Medical terms are regularly formed to facilitate the understanding of language with no loss of accuracy<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, medical terminology should be internationalized to adequately promote information among different countries<sup>1</sup>. Most medical terms, especially those recently created, are made from roots, prefixes, and Greek and Latin suffixes.

Recently, we have had a discussion about the spelling of the word *dissincronia* (or *dessincronia*), a medical term that has been commonly used in recent years because of its widespread use in refractory heart failure.

In favor of spelling *dessincronia*, our colleague Luiz Antônio Batista de Sá<sup>2</sup>, from Goiânia, sent a few years ago a reader's letter to the journal *Sobrac* of April/May/June 2012<sup>1</sup> suggesting that the correct spelling of the word would be *dessincronia*, using the Latin prefix *des* rather than the Greek *dis*, on the grounds that the former is associated with opposition: *preparado-despreparado* (ready-unprepared), *organizado-desorganizado* (organized-disorganized). In that document, our colleague also suggests searching the term at: <<http://www.priberam.pt/>> and adds that the dictionaries of Silveira Bueno<sup>3</sup> and Houaiss<sup>4</sup> do not include the term "*dissincronismo*," only "*dessincronismo*." He finally says that the suffix *dis-* in medicine is associated with difficulty, discomfort: *disfagia* (dysphagia), *dispepsia* (dyspepsia), *disartria* (dysarthria); hence, the correct term to be used would be *dessincronia*, since *dissincronismo* does not exist.

In turn, in the opinion of Dr. Joffre M. de Rezende (in a private communication), professor emeritus at Universidade de Goiás and author of the book *Linguagem Médica*<sup>1</sup>, it is important to emphasize that there is a reasonable variation of the meanings of the Greek and Latin prefixes. Citing the Houaiss dictionary, in the Greek prefix *dis*, it mentions the importance of the prefix in the formation of scientific terms and gives it two meanings: 1. difficulty, ex.: *dyspnea*; 2. deprivation, ex.: *dissymmetry*. The word *dissincronia* falls under in either of the two meanings. Dr. Rezende adds that *dessincronia* is a hybrid word, with the Latin prefix (*des*) joining a Greek prefix (*sin*)

and the Greek root (*chronos*). Although the International Scientific Vocabulary<sup>5</sup> is not completely strict as to the combination of new words, it strongly suggests not mixing roots with prefixes of different languages such as Greek and Latin. The combination is unusual in scientific terminology, especially for terms recently created.

At the same time, the Latin prefix *des* is very rarely used for medical terms, as seen in the above examples (*despreparado*, *desorganizado*), which are of current use, rather than scientific terms. The prefix *dis*, used in the word *dissincronia*, is the same Greek prefix used in the formation of a number of medical or scientific terms, such as *disartria*, *disfagia*, *discrasia*, *disenteria*, *distonia*, *dislalia*, *dismenorrea*, *dismorfia*, *dispepsia*, *displasia*, *dispneia*, *distrofia*, *disúria*, *disritmia*, *discinesia*, among others.

Finally, another important aspect to be considered is that in other languages (e.g., English, Spanish, French), this form exists with the Greek prefix and if the etymological spelling is used, then we can highlight the original roots of ancient Greek (*dys* + *syn* + *chronos* + *ia*). The term can be found spelled like that in the dictionary *Caudas Aulete*<sup>6</sup>:

(*dis.sin.cro.ni.a*) sf. 1. Lack of synchrony.

In conclusion, in the opinion of the current editor-in-chief, the term should follow the standards of international spelling, used for most other scientific medical terms in Portuguese. Therefore, the word *dissincronia* should be used, not *dessincronia*. However, as the two spellings are accepted by the Academia Brasileira de Letras (Brazilian Academy of Letters) as linguistic variants, it is at the author's discretion to use either spelling.

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