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To the Editor

The American Society for Mass Spectrometry, and particularly the Committee on Measurements and Standards, should be applauded for their hard work on their revision of the document, "Standard Definitions of Terms Relating to Mass Spectrometry" (*J. Am. Soc. Mass Spectrom.* **1991**, *2*, 336–348). To have such a compilation of terminology is vital for us to communicate our ideas and results accurately and precisely. Indeed, this document has the potential to be *the* international standard for mass spectrometric terminology.

Thus, I am surprised that the archaic gender-specific terms "daughter," "granddaughter," and "great-granddaughter," and the anthropomorphic "parent ion" and "progeny fragment ions," are supported in this compilation. Ions are not members of either the plant or animal kingdoms, and thus they are incapable of either sexual or asexual reproduction. Therefore, they are incapable of being either mothers, fathers, daughters, or sons. They are simply ions, or fragments of ions, or products of ion reactions. They can, however, be related as "first, second, or third generation" because, according to my Webster dictionary, "generation" can describe either persons, animals, or *things*.

It is most difficult to understand why "daughter ion" continues to be supported. The *ACS Style Guide*, published by the American Chemical Society *six years ago*, discourages the use of gender-specific language in ACS publications (see pages 103–104). The Council of the ACS, which represents approximately 140,000 professional chemists and chemical engineers, voted unanimously in April 1991 to remove all gender-specific terms from the ACS bylaws. If ACS can make such a timely move, I think ASMS can too.

When I first started publishing in mass spectrometry, I inanely used the expression "daughter ion." My mentor, who is now the Editor of this exceptional journal, urged me to stop using anthropomorphic terms to describe nonliving things. I consequently became sensitized to the term "daughter ion," and it became offensive to me. I know that there are many in *our* Society to whom this terminology is offensive. A very wise and sensitive scientist, who is also an Editor of one of our illustrious mass spectrometry journals, recently said, "Whoever continues to use a term after learning that it is offensive is rude. Use *product ion.*" (Maurice Bursey, *Mass Spectrom. Rev.*, **1991**, *10*, 1–2.)

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