

Acronyms Must Always be DEfined when USed for the first time:

AMADEUS

(Los acrónimos deben definirse siempre cuando se usan por primera vez AMADEUS)

To the Editor:

I greatly enjoyed reading the epidemiological article on coronary artery disease in Spain by Marrugat et al,¹ but I was disappointed to observe that, although the authors explained some of the acronyms of the studies mentioned in the article, like IBERICA, REGICOR, and MONICA, they did not define PANES and PRIAMHO. I am not sure why the criteria were applied so unevenly.

With the aim of keeping offended journal readers² from wasting their time trying to decipher these two acronyms, I would like to help them out. PANES means Prevalencia de ANgina en España (Prevalence of Angina in Spain), and PRIAMHO means Proyecto de Registro de Infarto Agudo de Miocardio HOspitalario (In-Hospital Acute Myocardial Infarction Registry Project).³

In accordance with the guidelines established by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors,⁴ manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals must always define acronyms the first time that they are mentioned in the article. Unfortunately, authors are rarely held to this requirement.⁵ In the absence of the definition of an acronym, uninformed readers are forced to make a series of unnecessary assumptions. Acronymy is contagious and particularly affects cardiologists. It thus is not surprising that doctors are discouraged from reading specialist journals, particularly cardiology journals, many of which are full of undefined acronyms.⁶⁻¹⁴

For that reason I must again insist that acronyms must always be defined when used for the first time (AMADEUS). As must already be evident, I recognize that am a great admirer of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, whose musical composition is perfect and play of words, invariably explicit.¹⁶

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Response

To the Editor:

We would like to thank Dr. Cheng for his observation regarding our article on the magnitude of coronary artery disease in Spain,¹ in which we defined the acronyms REGICOR (Registre GIroní de COR [Heart Registry of Girona]), IBERICA (Investigación, Búsqueda Específica y Registro de Isquemia Coronaria Aguda [Investigation, Specific Searches, and Registry of Acute Coronary Ischemia]), MONICA (MONItoring trends and determinants of Cardiovascular diseases), but we did not explain the meaning of PRIAMHO (Proyecto de Registro de Infarto Agudo de Miocardio Hospitalario [In-Hospital Acute Myocardial Infarction Registry Project]) and PANES (Prevalencia de ANgina en España [Prevalence of Angina in Spain]). In his AMADEUS plea (Acronyms Must Always be DEfined when USed for the first time), Cheng refers to an important point of confusion — acronymy² — and we can only salute his interest and vigilance. In fact, the first author of this article has corresponded in the past with Dr. Cheng, when he requested clarification of the MARATHOM study (Mesura de l'Activitat física i la seva relació Ambiental Total en l'HOME [Amount and intensity of physical activity, physical fitness, and serum lipids in men]).^{3,4}

We willingly admit our negligence. In our defense we only can say that the PANES and PRIAMHO studies were

organized by the Working Group on Ischemic Heart Disease of the Sociedad Española de Cardiología. Both have been documented in the REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE CARDIOLOGÍA,⁵⁻⁷ the official publication of the society, and the reference journal for cardiology in Spain. Likewise, an article on the PRIAMHO study⁷ was the most cited article published in 1999. For this reason, although none of this excuses our negligence, some might see their way to pardoning our assumption that both studies are well known among our colleagues.

Finally, we ask ourselves if the guidelines of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors also apply to Letters to the Editor. We note that Dr. Cheng omitted an explanation of the acronyms IBERICA, REGICOR, MONICA, PANES, and PRIAMHO the first time they appeared in his letter to the editor. He may have assumed that it was unnecessary or redundant to define these terms. Luckily, the reader only had to read the first paragraph of our response to decipher them.

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