

Stop! You're Deriving Me Crazy! Part 2

Acronym: Annoying Condensed
Rendering whose Originator
You'd like to Murder.
— TWH

This column is the second of two on the subject of acronyms, initialisms, abbreviations, contractions, and other conventions to shorten expressions.

The last column focused on a more serious treatment of this subject. In this one, I thought I would take a walk on the lighter side.

Ack!-ronyms

In preparing for this column, I did a survey of readers and correspondents—Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (BELS) members and others—for suggestions of good, bad, and “stick-a-finger-in-your-throat”-isms. I received many submissions—too many to acknowledge all of them. They are grouped by discipline or organization. Attributions, if any, are in brackets.

NASA

[all Elaine Firestone]

LoCNESS: Low-Cost NASA Environmental Sampling System

WiSPER: Wire-Stabilized Profiling Environmental Radiometer

THOR: Three-Headed Optical Recorder

RAMSES: Radiation Measurement Sensor with Enhanced Spectral Resolution

SIMBAD: Satellite Validation for Marine Biology and Aerosol Determination

CoASTS: Coastal Atmosphere and Sea Time Series

US Defense Department

MANPADS: Man-Portable Air-Defense System (became the FIM-92 Stinger)

(Isn't that name already a trademark of Kimberly-Clark?)

Medicine

BOOP: bronchiolitis obliterans with organizing pneumonia [Catherine Judge Allen]

60yo male SOB (medical chart): 60-year-old man with shortness of breath [Jessica Ancker]

PIA (medical chart): Pain in the a**—written on corner of medical charts to describe some patients' attitudes, not their medical condition. (Good thing none of the patients were of royal descent, otherwise the term would have been *RPIA*.) [Elaine Firestone]

Clinical Trials

CARET: beta-Carotene and Retinol Efficacy Trial [Jessica Ancker]

www.mtdesk.com/lstTrAcry.shtml contains some gems: **DAISY:** Diabetes Autoimmunity Study in the Young; **DINAMIT:** Defibrillation in Acute Myocardial Infarction Trial; **VANQWISH:** Veterans Affairs Non-Q-Wave Infarction Strategies in Hospitals; and **PAC-A-TACH,** Pacing in Atrial Fibrillation and Tachycardia [Michael Altus]

And three from Faith Reidenbach:

TRISTAN: TRial of Inhaled STeroids AND long-acting beta-agonists

ISOLDE: Inhaled Steroid in Obstructive Lung Disease in Europe

SMOG: Smoking Modulates Outcomes of Glucocorticoid therapy in asthma

High-Tech

PUMCODOXPURSACOMLOPAR: This received a vote from a Web researcher for the worst acronym, for Pulse-Modulated Coherent Doppler-Effect X-band Pulse-Repetition Synthetic-Array pulse Compression Lobe Planar Array **EAT-CHIP** and **SMASH-CLP** (“clip”):

The first—derivation unknown—was a bit of 90s technology related to air traffic control; the second stands for Systems Management Architecture for Server Hardware—Command Line Protocol

THWAQ: To Hell With Annie Quinn, the name a jilted Silicon Valley engineer at ROLM Corp. gave to a much-used software program in the 80s [Tricia Ward-Dolkas]

ELMER: Electronic Line Management Enterprise Reporting

ELMER nicely sets up the last category, submitted by BELS member Flory Nye-Clement:

Environmental Sciences

FUDS: Formerly Used Defense Sites—which if monitored by *ELMER* would of course be *ELMER FUDS*

LUST: Leaking Underground Storage Tank

OEHHA (pronounced “oh-ee-hah”): [California] Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment

QAPP (pronounced “kwapp”, as Elmer Fudd would say): Quality Assurance Project Plan

. . . and her personal all-time favorite:

PIGWETS: Proposed Interim Groundwater Extraction and Treatment System

And in a category of its own (drum roll, please): **EIEIO**, the initialism for a surveillance study called Emerging Infections and the Epidemiology of Iowa Organisms—appropriate for a farm state [Gordon Rudy]

Chuckle of the Month: None. If you’re not already chuckling, you are beyond help.

Note: Some of the content of this column also appears in *The BELS Letter*.

Correction

In the July-August 2006 issue of *Science Editor*, the title of The Word Hawk column on pages 133-134 was incorrect. The correct title should read “Stop! You’re Deriving Me Crazy”.