Acronyms Must always be defined (AMEN)

To the Editor:

In a recent article from a prominent cardiological journal, the authors compared major adverse cardiac event rates between primary coronary angioplasty and thrombolytic therapy. They reported their results for the PCAT collaboration, but never explained what the acronym PCAT stood for. That surprised and disappointed me, because according to the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals should define acronyms the first time they are used in any article.

Failure to define an acronym subjects the readers to an unnecessary guessing game. Furthermore, the same acronym may often be shared by several trials. For example, the acronym HEART is shared by as many as fifteen different trials. Thus the acronym PCAT could stand for either “Primary Coronary Angioplasty versus Thrombolysis for acute myocardial infarction” or “Parent Child Autotutorial Program”.

So I make a plea again: Acronyms Must always be defined (AMEN)!

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