

Acronyms for the rheumatology literature

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Acronyms are widely used in the field of rheumatology; many rheumatologic diseases and almost all of the autoantibodies that are so important in the management of patients are often indicated by their initials or short abbreviations. Moreover, researchers describing new conditions, tools and evaluative scales often propose acronyms to facilitate their introduction and use in the medical community.

Due to the great number of possible abbreviations and their increasing use in papers by specialists in the field, some years ago a group of editors of rheumatology journals focused on the need for a generally agreed upon list of acronyms in which there was an unequivocal correspondence between each acronym and its significance, in order to make their use as homogeneous as possible. Constructive discussion between editors, some of whose journals had already compiled their own lists, led to the creation of a unified list of acronyms that was approved and published (1). Each journal that participated in the project made it their official policy to encourage authors to use these acronyms when writing papers.

Clearly such a list must be updated regularly; new abbreviations have to be evaluated and those that are out of date or have fallen into disuse must be discarded. Therefore last year at the annual editors' meeting (ACR, San Antonio, 2004) a proposed series of changes was discussed and an amended list was drawn up for evaluation. After further discussion and modifications, a revised list of acronyms was approved. The editors agreed to use this new list and to make it available to the rheumatology community by posting it on their websites.

Clinical and Experimental Rheumatology herewith presents its readers with the revised list of rheumatology acronyms, which may also be found at our website (www.clinexprheumatol.org). The editors welcome any suggestions, which will be considered periodically as this list certainly must be considered a "work in progress", one reflecting the research that is being conducted in a rapidly evolving field.

Reference

1. BOMBARDIERI S, CAPONI L, AREND W: A unified list of acronyms for the rheumatology literature, in *Arthritis Rheum* 1998; 41: 1901-5.