


Received August 21, 1997 Accepted after resubmission November 19, 1997

What Is the Tasman Trial?

Dear Sir,

In the recent article on bleeding classification in clinical trials by Graafsmma et al. (1), the authors referred to the Tasman trial without either capitalizing the entire acronym or explaining what the acronym stands for. I am sure that many of your readers must have wondered as I was what the »Tasman« trial was.

The TASMAN trial was published in 1996 (2). Unfortunately, no definition of the acronym TASMAN was given in the original article either. I would like to share some interesting information which was kindly transmitted to me recently by Prof. Dr. J. W. ten Cate (personal communication). TASMAN stands for Thrombosis Anticoagulant Study Mediterranean Australia New Zealand. The first study on home treatment of deep vein thrombosis implicated centers in Australia and New Zealand. That continent was discovered by a Dutch navigator named Abel Janszoen Tasman (1603-1659).

In your Instructions to Authors, you specified that nomenclature and abbreviations should be according to internationally approved rules. According to the latter (3), the first time an abbreviation or an acronym appears, it should be preceded by the words for which it stands. The popularity of the clinical trials in cardiology has brought with it an unforeseen problem – a proliferation of acronyms. But each acronym must be fully explained when first used. Otherwise readers may find the enigmatic collection of unexplained acronyms a source of aggravation and frustration (4). To avoid confusion, each acronym must be capitalized in its entirety (5). Acronymophilia is contagious; the exponential growth of the use of acronyms should be resisted (6).

Tsung O. Cheng
The George Washington University, Washington, DC, USA

References

Received November 13, 1997 Accepted November 14, 1997