



Eponyms Quiz by Laura King, MA, ELS

Directions: Eponyms are names or phrases derived from or including the name of a person or place. Traditionally, eponyms named after the describer or discoverer (eg, Bell's palsy, Alzheimer's disease) took the possessive form and those named for other persons or for places took the nonpossessive form (eg, Guillain-Barré syndrome, Lyme disease); however, current usage dictates the omission of the 's in most cases. The following sentences all contain eponyms. Edit the sentences based on your reading of [chapter 16](#) of the [AMA Manual of Style](#). In some instances, referral to a medical dictionary (*Stedman's Medical Dictionary* or *Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary*) or another section of the style manual may be helpful.

1. Both congenital hypothyroidism and acquired hypothyroidism are common in patients with Down's syndrome.

ANSWER:

Both congenital hypothyroidism and acquired hypothyroidism are common in patients with Down syndrome.

Editor's Note: Although traditionally eponyms named after the describer or discoverer took the possessive form, current usage dictates the omission of the 's in most cases. A major step toward preference for the nonpossessive form occurred when the National Down Syndrome Society advocated the use of *Down syndrome*, rather than *Down's syndrome*, arguing that the syndrome does not actually belong to anyone ([§16.2](#), Noneponymous Form, pp 778-780 in print).

LEARNING RESOURCES

2. Huntington Disease (HD) is an incurable, dominant neurodegenerative disorder caused by polyglutamine repeat expansion in the huntingtin protein; reducing mutant huntingtin expression may offer a treatment for HD.

ANSWER:

Huntington disease (HD) is an incurable, dominant neurodegenerative disorder caused by polyglutamine repeat expansion in the huntingtin protein; reducing mutant huntingtin expression may offer a treatment for HD.

Editor's Note: With eponyms, capitalize the proper name but not the common nouns that follow it (§10.3.4, Eponyms and Words Derived From Proper Nouns, p 376 in print). The term *huntingtin* is not eponymous and so should not be capitalized.

3. Juvenile Paget's disease, or idiopathic hyperphosphatasia, is a rare recessively inherited disorder characterized by greatly accelerated bone turnover throughout the skeleton.

ANSWER:

Idiopathic hyperphosphatasia (juvenile Paget disease) is a rare recessively inherited disorder characterized by greatly accelerated bone turnover throughout the skeleton.

Editor's Note: Many eponyms can be replaced with noneponymous terms consisting of a descriptive word or phrase that applies to the same disease, condition, or procedure. In this example, *juvenile Paget disease* (no 's) can be replaced with *idiopathic hyperphosphatasia*, with the eponymous term placed in parentheses directly after it (§16.1, Eponymous vs Noneponymous Terms, pp 777-778 in print).

LEARNING RESOURCES

4. The data, which were analyzed with descriptive statistics and Fisher's exact test, included presenting age, sex, presenting signs, lesion site, and radiographic, endoscopic, and histologic findings.

ANSWER:

The data, which were analyzed with descriptive statistics and the Fisher exact test, included presenting age, sex, presenting signs, lesion site, and radiographic, endoscopic, and histologic findings.

Editor's Note: Occasionally, the nonpossessive eponymous term may appear awkward. This can often be addressed by using *the* before the term (§16.2, Noneponymous Form, pp 778-780 in print).

5. In the United States, the most common herbal treatments used by children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder are St John's wort, *Echinacea* species, and *Ginkgo biloba*.

ANSWER:

In the United States, the most common herbal treatments used by children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder are St John's wort, *Echinacea* species, and *Ginkgo biloba*.

Editor's Note: This example is correct as is. The possessive form is used when it is part of an established nonmedical eponymous name (§16.2, Noneponymous Form, pp 778-780 in print).

6. Genetic approaches have helped define the underlying molecular events responsible for some Mendelian forms of glaucoma.

ANSWER:

Genetic approaches have helped define the underlying molecular events responsible for some mendelian forms of glaucoma.

Editor's Note: Derivative adjectival forms of proper names are not capitalized (§16.1, Eponymous vs Noneponymous Terms, pp 777-778 in print).



LEARNING RESOURCES

7. The 30-year-old athlete sought treatment for chronic soreness of his right elbow (pitcher's elbow).

ANSWER:

The 30-year-old athlete sought treatment for chronic soreness of his right elbow (pitcher's elbow).

Editor's Note: This example is correct as is. The possessive form is retained for noneponymous terms describing disorders characteristic of certain occupations or activities ([§16.2](#), Noneponymous Form, pp 778-780 in print).

8. The study included 189 patients who met National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke–Alzheimer Disease and Related Disorders Association (NINCDS-ADRDA) criteria for probable Alzheimer disease.

ANSWER:

The study included 189 patients who met National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke–Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Association (NINCDS-ADRDA) criteria for probable Alzheimer disease.

Editor's Note: The correct expansion of the acronym ADRDA uses the possessive term *Alzheimer's* (§14.8, Agencies and Organizations, p 462 in print). The possessive form is retained if it is part of the name of an organization or was used in the original of a quotation or citation ([§16.2](#), Noneponymous Form, pp 778-780 in print).



LEARNING RESOURCES

9. Stiff man's syndrome is a rare disorder that is characterized by progressive muscle stiffness, rigidity, and spasms predominantly affecting axial musculature.

ANSWER:

Stiff man syndrome is a rare disorder that is characterized by progressive muscle stiffness, rigidity, and spasms predominantly affecting axial musculature.

Editor's Note: *Stiff man syndrome* is a noneponymous term referring to a person with "continuous isometric contraction of many of the somatic muscles" (*Stedman's Medical Dictionary*). Although the possessive form is usually retained for such noneponymous terms (such as those named for occupations or activities, eg, woolsorter's disease), always check such terms in a medical dictionary for correct usage ([§16.2](#), Noneponymous Form, pp 778-780 in print).

10. Farr's Law of Epidemics, first promulgated in 1840 and resurrected by Brownlee in the early 1900s, states that epidemics tend to rise and fall in a roughly symmetrical pattern that can be approximated by a normal bell-shaped curve.

ANSWER:

Farr's Law of Epidemics, first promulgated in 1840 and resurrected by Brownlee in the early 1900s, states that epidemics tend to rise and fall in a roughly symmetrical pattern that can be approximated by a normal bell-shaped curve.

Editor's Note: This example is correct as is. For those eponyms that have a degree of historical and cultural value and have become well known, retain the possessive form (eg, Newton's Law of Gravity, Einstein's Theory of Relativity) ([§16.1](#), Eponymous vs Noneponymous Terms, pp 777-778 in print).