MEDICAL EPONYMS AND DESCRIPTIVE TERMINOLOGY ACROSS SPECIALTIES: PATTERNS OF USE, TRANSLATION, AND REPRESENTATION ON MEDICAL PLATFORMS

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Abstract

Medical eponyms have been an integral part of medical terminology, especially in clinical language across diverse medical specialties. However, their continued use in the medical field has sparked debate surrounding clarity, cultural relevance, and international consistency. This paper investigates the role and representation of eponyms in medical discourse, with a particular focus on Romanian clinical and public health contexts. This study explores the historical, mythological, and linguistic origins, analyzing their grammatical forms and classification patterns, as well as trends in their usage and decline within various medical disciplines. Particular attention is also given to their descriptive equivalents, as well as to their translation and adaptation within the Romanian medical context. By reviewing both international and national literature, along with Romanian medical websites, notably Regina Maria and MedLife, the study reveals that eponyms remain prevalent in professional and clinical settings despite a growing trend toward descriptive terminology.

Keywords: *medical eponym, medical terminology, medical discourse, descriptive term, medical field, translation equivalent, English, Romanian*

1. INTRODUCTION

Eponyms are words derived from proper names (Newmark 1988: 140). In medicine, an eponym or eponymic structure is related to a disease, syndrome, physical sign, procedure, operation, or test derived from a proper name. These words or word combinations may generally refer to the doctors, or scientists who brought significant contributions to the field (e.g. *Alzheimer's disease, Hashimoto thyroiditis*), or they may commemorate the names of patients (e.g. *Tan syndrome*), historical, biblical and literary figures (e.g. *David's lyre; Adam's apple; Alice in Wonderland syndrome; Rapuzel Syndrome*), mythological characters or mythonyms (e.g. *Achilles tendon; Oedipus complex; atlas, Ammon's horn, Mons Veneris*), and places (e.g. *Lyme disease*). Mention should be made that eponyms are less favored nowadays than they were a generation ago. It is important to point out that a significant number of medical terms originate from classical mythology, a vast body of ancient narratives preserved in the writings of Homer, Hesiod, the Greek tragedians, Virgil and Ovid, and other authors from antiquity. Many of medicine's most iconic symbols have their roots in Greek and Roman mythology. Asclepius, described in Homer's Iliad as a noble and skilled healer, was taught the art of medicine by the wise centaur Chiron. His staff, *the staff of Asclepius,* known in Romanian *as toiagul lui Asclepius* or *toiagul lui Esculap,* features a single coiled serpent and remains the authentic emblem of the medical field, continuing to represent healing and care today. Thus, it is unsurprising that medicine, both ancient and modern, has adopted mythological figures to name anatomical structures, diseases, and psychological conditions (see sections 4.1 and 4.7 below).

Contemporary physicians consider that most eponyms bear little connection to the diseases or anatomical structures they name beyond their historical origins, thus offering limited help for memory or understanding. In addition, numerous eponyms feature irregular spellings or pronunciations, which further complicates medical literacy in today's context. For the purpose of this research, we consulted several prominent Romanian medical websites, including Regina Maria and MedLife, in order to verify the existence and frequency of use of eponymic structures in contemporary Romanian medical discourse.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Although extensively researched, eponyms in medicine continue to pose significant challenges and invite renewed scholarly attention due to their dynamic roles in medical communication, classification, and cultural transmission (Schröeder, 2022; Zhdan et al., 2021; Burdan et al., 2016, etc.). While there is a wealth of literature as to their historical origins and ethical implications, there remains room for exploration into how these terms function across medical specialties, how they are translated into the TL (target language), and how both professionals and laypeople perceive them. A fairly recent contribution to eponyms by Nedumannil and Lewis (2024) raises the question of whether eponyms should continue to be part of medical discourse. The researchers criticize the continued use of eponyms in medical terminology, especially without thoughtful consideration. They argue that many eponyms are associated with problematic histories or lack descriptive value. The authors support a shift toward descriptive, pathophysiology-based naming (https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/). They suggest that eponymous terms should be replaced with more descriptive, inclusive, and transparent medical terminology to promote clarity, equity, and historical accuracy. The same authors also address some gender-related aspects concerning medical eponyms. Thus, according to the researchers, medical eponyms highlight and reinforce the historical underrepresentation and systemic bias against women and the broader context of gender inequality. Another important contribution to the study of medical eponyms belongs to Lysanets and Bieliaieva (2023). The researchers dealt with the use of eponyms in medical case reports, studying the prevalence of these terms in the issues of the Journal of Medical Case Reports from 2008-2022 and classifying them according to their etymological origin and frequency of occurrence. The purpose of their research was to demonstrate that mythological and literary eponyms are present in doctors' spoken and written discourse.

In Romania, valuable contributions to the study of eponyms across various fields, including medical eponyms from a linguistic perspective, have been made by Professors Floriana Popescu and Carmen Maftei from Dunărea de Jos University of Galaţi (2004), as well as by Popescu (2005) and Badea (2008).

3. GENITIVE FORMS AND EPONYM USAGE IN MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY

Building on this body of research, it is important not only to investigate the presence of eponyms in medical discourse but also to review the grammatical forms through which they are realized. A key aspect of this is the use of genitive constructions. Thus, in medical terminology, genitive forms, which express possession or association, are commonly used to name diseases, signs, anatomical structures, and medical devices after the people who first discovered or described them. There are several ways to express this relationship, primarily divided into the synthetic genitive and the analytic genitive, along with an attributive form often seen in medical contexts.

The synthetic genitive, also known as the 's genitive, is the most familiar form. It expresses possession by adding 's directly to a person's name. This form is widely used for short, well-known eponyms. Examples include *Parkinson's disease, Murphy's sign*, *Heberden's nodes,* etc. Here, the *'s* indicates that the disease, sign, or nodes are associated with the individual who first described them. According to Popecu and Maftei (2004: 175), the vast majority of eponyms in medical terminology appear in the possessive case and are generally combined with common nouns. These common nouns are drawn from the basic word-stock and are used with their denotative, literal meanings in medical terminologies. Examples include: *area (Broca's area → zona Broca* or *aria lui Broca), procedure (i.e., Whipple procedure), method (i.e., Bishop method), sign (i.e., Babinski's sign, Kernig's sign, Murphy's sign), spot (Koplik spots; Roth spots), layer (i.e., Malpighian layer, Henle's layer, etc.),* etc.

The analytic genitive uses the preposition *of* to express possession or association and is often used with longer or more complex names. This form is common in anatomical terminology or when the possessive *'s* would be awkward or unclear. For instance*, crypts of Lieberkühn → criptele lui Lieberkühn* or in descriptive terms *glande mici şi tubulare situate în mucoasa intestinului subțire; islets of Langerhans → insule Langerhans, insulele lui Langerhans,* also known in Romanian medical discourse as *insule pancreatice*, and *angle of Louis → unghiul lui Louis,* all use the analytic genitive. This construction tends to be more formal and descriptive, making it suitable for detailed anatomical

descriptions. In addition, there is the attributive genitive, where a noun directly modifies another noun without any possessive marker. This form is frequently used to name medical devices, instruments, or procedures. Examples include the *Levin tube, Stryker frame, Pap smear, etc*. In these cases, the first noun serves as an adjective describing the object, indicating it was developed or popularized by the person named.

Ayesu et al. (2018) highlight the fact that inconsistent use of medical eponyms, particularly the possessive (e.g., Parkinson's disease) and the non-possessive forms (e.g., Down syndrome), creates confusion in medical education and literature searching. Although major health organizations like the NIH (National Institute of Health) and WHO (World Health Organization) recommend using non-possessive forms to avoid peculiar associations (i.e., suggesting the person the disease is named after had the condition), contemporary medical literature still uses both forms inconsistently, even in leading journals indexed in PubMed. The same researchers raise awareness of this inconsistency and call for the uniform use of non-possessive eponyms in scientific publishing to improve clarity in medical communication and learning.

Several medical eponyms have become so widely used that their origins as names are no longer obvious. Terms like *stent, bedlam, atlas, iris,* and *seltzer* constitute examples of this phenomenon. Even more frequently, we encounter adjectival forms derived from names such as *eustachian tube, fallopian tube,* and *graafian follicle*. These derivative terms are usually written in lowercase and often feature adjectival suffixes that were not part of the original proper names.

4. CLASSIFICATION OF MEDICAL EPONYMS

Medical eponyms can be classified based on their referents (e.g., discoverer, patient, mythological, figure, literary figure, historical or cultural references), medical domain or specialty (e.g., anatomy, dermatology, cardiology, etc.), structure (e.g., simple vs. compound eponyms; possessive vs. non-possessive form), and function in medical terminology. Popescu and Maftei (2004: 174) stress that the literature of eponymy focuses on their semantic and structural classification. According to their analysis, medical eponyms fall into categories such as compound terms, attributive constructions, possessive and suffix-based derivatives, reflecting the various ways in which personal names are integrated into medical terminology. Several eponymous patterns emerge:

a) Eponym('s) + noun (e.g., Achile's tendon; Hashimoto thyroiditis; Cushing syndrome,etc.)

b) Eponym's + determinant(s) + noun

c) Suffix-based eponym +noun (e.g., *adjective-forming suffix -ian +noun*: *Fallopian tube; Eustachian tube; Malpighian bodies, Mullerian agenesis, etc)*

d) *Noun + of +eponym (e.g., angle of Louis; artery of Adamkiewicz,* etc.)

e) *Noun + of +eponym + noun (e.g., vein of Galen malformation)*

Common nouns that often appear alongside personal names can generally be grouped into three categories: general language words, words used across various scientific disciplines, and those specific to medical terminology. As far as the translation of eponymic structures is concerned, it should be pointed out that they are translated in Romanian by quite similar formations. However, Peter Newmark (1988: 34) warns us to pay particular attention to the proper names in medical texts:" a drug in one country will be marketed under another brand name in another […]. Tests, symptoms, diseases, syndromes, parts of the body are named after one scientist in one language community and a different one, or are given a more general term in another". In what follows, we will analyze and comment on a selection of eponyms organized according to the medical specialties to which they belong.

4.1. Eponyms in Anatomy

Anatomy is quite a prolific field of study when it comes to eponyms and eponymous structures. Several eponyms in this area are rooted in mythology, and it is often fascinating to discover the story behind these linguistic patterns. For instance, the patterns *Achille's tendon* or *Achille's heel → tendonul*

/călcâiul lui Ahile are named after the legendary Greek warrior Achilles, and here, reference is made to his heel as his only point of vulnerability (i.e. Achilles mother, Thetis tried to make her son immortal by dipping him in the river Styx; she protected him by this, except for his heel by which she was holding him; Paris, Helen of Troy's lover killed Achille by shooting an arrow in his vulnerable heel). The idea should be pointed out that the linguistic structure *Achille's tendon/heel* has become so routinized that it migrated to the common core lexicon, being used figuratively, and standing for "*a small problem or weakness in a person or system that can result in failure"* according to the Cambridge Dictionary (https://dictionary.cambridge.org). Another example is the *Eustachian tube*, the auditory tube connecting the middle ear to the nasopharynx. In Romanian it is most often called *trompa lui Eustachio* or *tuba auditivă*. Similarly, *the Fallopian tubes*, named after Gabriele Falloppio, are known in Romanian as *trompele uterine*, *tuburile lui Fallopio sau tuburile falopiene* (see also section 4.5 below). Among important anatomical eponyms, the Harvesian canals are fundamental structures in the anatomy of the bone tissue. These canals are named after the English anatomist Clopton Havers. In Romanian medical terminology, these are known as *canalele Havers* or simply *canalele havesiene.* Some other patterns including the eponym Havers or the adjectival form, are: *osul haversian, coloane haversiene,* and *sistem Havers.* Additional anatomical eponyms include: *Malpighian corpuscles* (i.e., structures in the spleen and kidney) translates in Romanian as *corpusculii Malpighi*; *Gasserian ganglion* or *Gasser's ganglion* → *ganglionul lui Gasser* (i.e., the trigeminal nerve ganglion).

Furthermore, certain eponymic structures in medical English, follow unique grammatical conventions in the use of plural forms. For instance, *Fallopian tubes,* and *Bartholin glands* are expressed only in the plural, as the anatomy consists of bilateral structures. Some other examples of eponymic structures are typically in the plural: *Harvesian canals, Wolffian ducts, islets of Langerhans, Cowper's glands, etc.*

Another instance of routinized medical terms rooted in mythology includes the words *iris* and *atlas*, both of them being integrated into the standard medical lexicon as common nouns. The *iris of the eye* bears the name of Iris, the main messenger of the gods in Homer's Iliad. According to Fortuine (2000: 236), Iris was believed to be the personification of the rainbow, and she was often represented in art with a brightly colored halo. The combining form *irid-* appears in the medical term iridectomy, which is a surgical procedure involving the removal of a portion of the iris. The Romanian translation for most eponyms in anatomy follows the patterns: *noun + proclitic article + eponym;* or *noun + eponym*.

4.2. Eponyms in Cardiology

Cardiology also incorporates a significant number of eponyms to describe anatomical structures, clinical signs, conditions, methods, techniques, and procedures. Mention needs to be made that in Romanian medical discourse, these eponyms are generally preserved, though descriptive translations may occasional→ly be used to improve accessibility. A notable example is *the vein of Galen malformation ,* which is a rare congenital vascular anomaly involving the cerebral veins. It is named after "the most important medical figure in Ancient Rome" (Martin, 2015: 50). In Romanian, it is translated as *malformaţie de venă Galen,* following the pattern *noun + prep+ noun + eponym.* Another example is *the artery of Adamkiewicz,* the largest segmental medullary artery, essential for spinal cord perfusion. In Romanian this is often rendered descriptively as *artera măririi lombare, artera lombară radiculară, artera radiculară anterioară mare, artera spinării lombare, artera umflăturii lombare*. The use of descriptive terminology in this case improves understanding for the readers, although the original eponymis still common in academic settings (i.e. *artera lui Adamkiewicz* or *artera Adamkiewicz*). Some cardiology-related eponyms, such as *Wolff-Parkinson-White syndrome → sindromul Wolff-Parkinson-White*, are used in both English and Romanian without modification, due to the specificity and international recognition of the term. This term is abbreviated in medical Romanian as *sindrom WPW* and may be accompanied by explanatory phrasing, such as "*afecţiune cardiacă care face inima să bată anormal de repede (tahicardie)"*, to aid patient comprehension. Some other examples of eponymic structures related to the field of cardiology are: *the Bundle of His → fasciculul His; Purkinje fibers → fibrele Purkinje; Osler nodes → nodulii Osler, etc.*

In conclusion, the field of cardiology retains a variety of eponymous terms that are frequently mirrored in Romanian medical language.

4.3. Eponyms in Dermatology

Dermatology, like many other medical specialties, makes frequent use of eponyms to describe specific skin conditions. Eponyms in dermatology often serve as compact linguistic devices to encode complex clinical conditions into easily recognizable labels. Their usage in Romanian points to a balance between international standardization, linguistic clarity, and cultural adaptability. As we shall see in what follows, in Romanian, dermatological eponyms are variably preserved, adapted, and translated. The metaphorical expression *ugly duckling → rățuşca cea urâtă* is used in the field of dermatology to refer to a mole or a nevus with an unusual appearance in terms of shape, color, and size, which is indicative of a type of skin cancer. This eponym is coined after Hans Andersen's fairy tale *The Ugly Duckling* and was introduced by Grobet et al. in the early 2000s as part of a diagnostic strategy for melanoma detection. By analogy, the odd mole may indicate a lesion that stands out in comparison to the patient's other nevi (moles). Other examples of eponyms belonging to the field of dermatology include the following: *Bowen disease → boala Bowen; Kaposi sarcoma → sarcom Kaposi; Stevens-Johnson syndrome → sindromul Stevens- Johnson; Dariers disease → boala Darier; Reiters syndrome → sindromul Reiter, etc.* The fact must be underlined that the eponym *Bowen disease* is often referred to as *squamous cell carcinoma in situ → carcinom scuamos in situ.*

Another eponymic pattern that caught our attention is *erizipeloidul Barker-Rosenach,* or *erizipeloidul lui Rosenach* (i.e., *specialized term+ proclitic article + eponym*). According to Lascăr (2005: 133) *Erizipeloidul Baker-Rosenach* is an infectious and contagious disease affecting both humans and animals, being caused by a bacterium. This disease is common among workers in the food and domestic sectors, as well as housewives. We have chosen to include this term in the category of dermatological conditions because the primary clinical manifestations of this disease appear on the skin (i.e., inflammation, redness, swelling, pain).

Table 1. Eponyms specific to the field of dermatology

Eponym in English	Equivalent in Romanian	Origin	Use
Auspitz sign	Semnul Auspitz	Named after the Austrian dermatologist Heinrich Auspitz	Bleeding in psoriasis when scales are removed
Bazex syndrome	Sindromul Bazex	Named after the French dermatologist André Bazex	Paraneoplastic dermatosis, often a marker of hidden cancer
Darier sign	Boala Darier; boala lui Darier	Named after the French dermatologist Ferdinand Jean Darier	Follicular dyskeratosis
Paget disease	Bola Paget a sânului	Named after the English surgeon James Paget	A rare form of breast cancer that presents as a lesion of the nipple
Stevens-Johnson syndrome	Sindromul Stevens-Johnson	Named after the American physicians Albert Stevens and Frank Johnson	A very severe form of mucocutaneous reaction, mostly triggered by medications or infections.

As shown in table 1 above, the field of dermatology is also very rich in eponyms. There are cases of eponymous structures that are no longer in use. For instance, the eponym *Reiter's syndrome → sindromul Reiter*, is outdated and even avoided due to Reiter's association with Nazi war crimes. This eponym refers to the condition reactive arthritis.

4.4. Eponyms in Endocrinology

In endocrinology, several well-established medical conditions are named after the physician who first identified or described them. This short section presents a selection of key endocrine disorders, providing their English and Romanian designations, and offering some insights. Thus, the first eponymous structure that we selected is *Hashimoto thyroiditis → tiroidita Hashimoto*, a common cause of hypothyroidism, which is often referred to in popular and semi-clinical registers as *the sadness disease*, *tired thyroid,* or *thyroid blues,* and in Romanian as *boala supărării.* These labels point to a symptom-focused perspective, stressing the emotional and psychological effects of this disease, particularly fatigue and depression, rather than its autoimmune origin. This condition is named after the Japanese physician Hakuru Hashimoto, who first described it in 1912 (Caturegli et al. 2013:142). Other eponyms that belong to the field of endocrinology, which we found on medical platforms, are the following: *Addison disease → boala Addison,* named after Thomas Addison*; Cushing syndrome → sindromul Cushng*, named after the American neurosurgeon Harvey Cushing; *Basedow-Graves disease → boala Basedow- Graves*, named after the Irish physician Robert James Graves and the German physician Adolph von Basedow; *Sheehan's syndrome → sindromul Sheehan* named after the British pathologist Harold Sheehan, etc.

These terms are paralleled by descriptive terms or synonymic sets (e.g., *Basedow-Graves disease → boala Basedow-Graves* is often referred to *as boala Graves* or as *guşă exoftalmică → exophthalmic goiter* (i.e. enlargement of the goiter).

4.5. Eponyms in Gynecology

The eponymic construction *Bartholin glands* refers to the glands which are part of the female reproductive system, commonly known in Romanian as *glandele Bartholin*. These glands are named after the Danish anatomist and physician Caspar Bartholin the Younger (1655-1738), who is known for his detailed studies on the human reproductive system. Common word phrases including the eponym Bartholin are the following: *Bartholin's cysts → chisturi de glandă Bartholin*; *Bartholin's abcess → abces de glandă Bartholin*, but also *bartholinită → bartholinitis,* which is an inflammation and infection of these glands. The eponymic structure *Stein-Leventahal Syndrome → sindromul Stein-Leventhal* refers to a condition in women characterized by a high level of male hormones called androgens and the absence of ovulation. This syndrome bears the name of two American gynecologists, Irving Stein and Michael Leventhal, who first described the condition in the 1930s. Nowadays, the term is often used interchangeably with the compound *polycystic ovary syndrome* (PCOS), which is the more commonly adopted term in both clinical and public health discourse. In Romanian medical discourse, we often find the syntagms *sidrom de ovar polichistic (i.e.,* composed of the indefinite noun *sindrom* followed by a prepositional noun phrase *de ovar polichistic*)*, sindromul ovarului polichistic* (i.e. composed of the definite noun *sindromul,* the genitive singular noun *ovarului*, and the adjective *polichistic*), or *sindromul ovarelor polichistice,* all these three structures being often abbreviated and commonly referred to as *SOP.*

A clear example of the duality between eponymic and descriptive naming in medical language can be seen in the condition referred to as *Rokitansky-Küster-Hauser Syndrome → Sindromul Rokitansky-Küster-Hauser*. This compound eponym is formed from the names of three physicians who contributed to the description of the syndrome (i.e. a congenital disorder that affects the female reproductive system, namely the development of the uterus and upper vaginal canal, according to Regina Maria website https://www.reginamaria.ro/utile/dictionar-de-afectiuni/sindromul-mayer-rokitansky-kuster-hauser).
Mention should be made that this form is less accessible to non-specialists, offering no immediate information about the nature of the condition. A descriptive alternative in Romanian for this eponym is *aplazie parţială a uterului → partial aplasia of the uterus, w*hich explicitly communicates the main pathological feature of the condition, through the components, *aplazie* – a specialized noun standing for developmental failure or incomplete formation, and the genitive structure *a uterului (*i.e., *of the uterus)*.
In addition to mentioning that this medical condition was first described in 1829, but that historical evidence of its existence dates as far back as 460 B.C., the Regina Maria website also provides several names used to refer to it, as follows: *sindromul Rokitansky → Rokitansky Syndrome; sindromul Kuster →Kuster Syndrome; agenezie vaginală → vaginal ageneis; Agenezie mulleriană → Mullerian agenesis;*

the fully descriptive and semantically transparent phrase *absenta congenitală a uterului şi a vaginului → congenital absence of the uterus and vagina,* and the acronymic non-transparent eponym *sindromul MRKH*.

The fact must be mentioned that not all eponyms are retained in their original form. A notable example from gynecology is the case of the lexical structure *Fallopian tubes*, which is not commonly referred to as *trompele lui Fallopio*, or *trompele falopiene.* Instead, the commonly accepted Romanian equivalent is *trompele uterine*, a descriptive, non-eponymic phrase that emphasizes anatomical function and location rather than historical attribution. This is a clear instance of an adjectival eponym being replaced by a functional, descriptive term. The eponymic adjective *fallopian,* bearing the name of Gabriele Fallopio, is thus translated not with an equivalent derived adjective, but with a semantic equivalent based on anatomical relevance (i.e. *uterine* → related to the uterus). Frequently used alternatives are the denomination *tuburile lui Fallopio* and *tuburile falopiene* (https://www.medlife.ro; https://reginamaria.ro).

4.6. Eponyms in Neurology

The field of neurology is also rich in eponyms. A prominent example is *Parkinson's disease*, known in Romanian as *boala Parkinson*. Named after British physician James Parkinson, this progressive neurodegenerative disorder primarily affects motor function and coordination. Romanian clinical sources, such as Regina Maria, describe it as *"o afecțiune neurodegenerativă progresivă, ce afectează, în principal, mișcarea și coordonarea"*. Several diagnostic and clinical subtypes are recognized in Romanian medical discourse, including *boala Parkinson idiopatică, parkinsonism genetic, parkinson cu debut precoce,* and *Parkinson akinetic-rigid*. These compound structures integrate the eponym with descriptive modifiers, balancing tradition with clarity.

In some cases, the term *parkinsonism* is used as a generic category for conditions that mimic Parkinson's disease but arise from other etiologies, such as secondary drug-induced causes. As noted by Sanador, „*pacienții pot avea manifestări clinice similare cu boala Parkinson, deși nu au această boală"*, thus reinforcing the need for terminological nuance in clinical diagnosis. Similarly, the eponym *Alzheimer's disease*, rendered as *boala Alzheimer* or *demență Alzheimer*, is another widely recognized neurological eponym. First described by Alois Alzheimer, it designates a degenerative condition marked by progressive memory loss and cognitive decline. In Romanian medical practice, the term is used alongside or interchangeably with the more general *demență neurodegenerativă*, depending on the context and audience.

Another illustrative example is the eponym *Tourette syndrome*, rendered in Romanian as *sindromul Tourette*. This condition, characterized by motor and vocal tics, is named after the French neurologist Georges Gilles de la Tourette. The eponym is consistently preserved in both specialist and general medical communication, due to its international recognition and diagnostic specificity.

Further examples include *Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease*, translated as *boala Creutzfeldt-Jakob*, a rare and fatal neurodegenerative condition caused by prion proteins. Named after German neurologists Hans Gerhard Creutzfeld and Alfons Maria Jakob, this eponym appears in both academic texts and medical websites such as MedLife, often accompanied by clarifying information due to its rarity and complexity. This pattern of retaining eponyms, especially for rare neurological conditions, extends beyond disease names into the anatomical terminology of brain regions.

The Broca's area, associated with speech production and named after French physician Paul Broca, is translated as *aria lui Broca* or *zona Broca* in Romanian. This eponym is frequently used in neurology and speech-language pathology, and it often appears alongside descriptive explanations such *as zona corticală responsabilă de producerea vorbirii* (the cortical area responsible for speech production). Medlife website mentions the denomination *Broca* in relation to several patterns such as: *afazie Broca → Broca's aphasia; zona Broca → Broca's area.* Another notable example is the *Wernicke's area*, involved in language comprehension. In Romanian, it appears as *aria lui Wernicke* or *zona lui Wernicke*. These terms are retained in their eponymous forms in both academic texts and clinical contexts, given their specificity and long-standing use. In a similar vein, MedLife mentions the patterns *afazie Wernicke* and *zona lui Wernicke*.

4.7. Eponyms in Psychiatry

In psychiatry, eponyms are especially meaningful. Unlike purely biological conditions, psychiatric syndromes and disorders often reflect deep connections between behavior, identity, culture, and perception. The most familiar and perhaps the oldest mythological entity associated with psychiatric disorders was *Psyche*. The myth of Psyche symbolizes suffering, endurance, and eventual transformation. This aspect points to the term's evolution from a mythological and theological one to a core concept in Psychiatry. The medical use of this term seems to be attributed to Carl Gustav Jung (Fortuine 2000: 244).

For instance, in clinical medicine, especially in the U.S. and early medical literature, the eponym *Ulysse syndrome → sindromul Ulise,* the term was metaphorically used to refer to the unnecessary testing and patient anxiety that occurred after an abnormal screening result, often a false positive. This usage is no longer common today. The eponym takes its name from the Latin version of Odysseus, the Greek hero in Homer's Odyssey, who spent ten long, eventful years struggling to get back home to Ithaca. In contemporary medical discourse, this term is used to describe the mental and emotional toll on migrants due to extreme chronic stress (i.e., separation, insecurity, culture shock). The idea should be pointed out that this is the dominant meaning in today's mental health discourse.

Thus, the field of psychiatry offers a uniquely symbolic and culturally resonant space for eponyms. Whether originating from mythology, art, clinical history, or sociopolitical realities, these terms enrich medical discourse.

Another notable example of eponym found in the field of psychiatry is *Cotard syndrome → sindromul Cotard.* It is a rare neuropsychiatric condition in which patients suffer from nihilistic delusions, believing they are dead or do not exist.

4.8 Eponyms in Surgery

Eponyms in surgery are related to different types of sutures, surgical methods, techniques, procedures, incisions, resections (i.e., *Billroth I resection → rezecție Billroth*), anatomical structures, or diseases. These eponyms often follow patterns like: *eponym's + noun; eponym + procedure type/anastomosis/ syndrome; compound eponyms*. The common nouns of these patterns pertain to the highly specialized terminology, as illustrated in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Eponyms in Surgery

Eponym in English	**Equivalent in Romanian**	**Origin**	**Use**
Billroth resection/ procedure	*Rezecție Billroth I / II; gastrectomie Billroth I / II*	Named after Theodor Billroth, an Austrian surgeon	Types of partial gastrectomies with different reconstruction methods
Bassini repair	*Procedeul Bassini*	Named after the Italian surgeon Eduardo Bassini	A method for hernia repair that involves the reinforcement of the inguinal canal
Hofmeister-Finsterer anastomosis	*Anastomoză Hofmeister-Finsterer*	Named after the German pharmacologist and physiologist Franz von Hofmeister and after Josef Finsterer, who refined Hofmeister's technique	A surgical reconstruction technique used after partial gastrectomy (i.e., removal of the lower part of the stomach)

Heller myotomy	*Miotomie Heller*	Named after Ernest Heller, a German surgeon.	Surgical intervention for achalasia (i.e., esophageal motility disorder)
Nissen fundoplication	*Fundoplicatura Nissen*	Named after the German surgeon Rudolf Nissen	Surgical intervention for gastroesophageal reflux disease
Sistrunk procedure	*Procedura Sistrunk*	Named after the American surgeon Walter Elis Sistrunk	Surgical removal of thyroglossal duct cyst

5. REPRESENTATION OF EPONYMS ON REGINA MARIA AND MEDLIFE MEDICAL PLATFORMS

In addition to analyzing several academic and clinical medical texts, this study also relied on a corpus of articles published on the websites and digital platforms of major Romanian healthcare providers like MedLife and Regina Maria. We have come across over 300 eponymic patterns, and during our analysis, we noticed that certain eponyms appeared exclusively on one platform/ website (i.e. some eponyms were mentioned only on MedLife and not on Regina Maria, and vice versa). It should be pointed out that these websites serve as key platforms for public health information and are frequently consulted by healthcare professionals, medical students, and instructors, as well as the general public (i.e., laypeople). Our research indicates that Romanian often retains the eponym, especially for well-known conditions, but a descriptive term or explanation is also preserved. In other words, the use of eponyms on these platforms reflects a blend of clinical convention, patient accessibility, and editorial choice. Both platforms serve as educational and informational services, offering medical information to the public, through health articles, service descriptions, and disease explanations. Our analysis indicates that eponyms are consistently used, especially in relation to well-known diseases, disorders, and syndromes such as *boala Adison, boala Alzheimer; boala Parkinson, boala von Willebrand, demenţă Alzheimer, sindromul Down; limfomul Hodgkin, boala Parkinson, boala Chron, sindromul Cushing*, *sindromul Nelson, sindromul Turette, afazie Wernicke, afazie Broca, boala Creutzfeldt-Jakob, testul Boston, complex Carnney, sindrom von Hippel-Lindau, sindrom Wermer, sindrom Down, sindromul Waterhouse-Friderichsen,* etc.

In the sentence provided below, there are two instances of eponyms used in a clinical context, namely *Carney complex* and *von Hippel-Lindau syndrome*. Both eponyms illustrate patterns of use in Romanian medical terminology:

"*La persoanele care au rude diagnosticate cu adenom hipofizar, precum și la persoanele cu anumite afecțiuni genetice (neurofibromatoză, sindrom MEN1, MEN4****, complex Carnney****, sindrom von Hippel-Lindau****) este necesar un control endocrinologic periodic, cu analize de sânge hormonale și IRM hipofizar"*(https://www.medlife.ro/glosar-medical/afectiuni-medicale/adenomul-hipofizar-cauze-simptome-tratament)

Their English equivalents, namely *Carnney syndrome* and *von Hippel-Lindau syndrome*, point to a non-possessive form, increasingly favoured in modern medical language. The pattern *sindrom MEN1 → MEN1 syndrome* in the example above refers to a rare hereditary condition, also known by its descriptive name *multiple endocrine neoplasia type 1→ neoplazie multiplă endocrină de tip 1, or*, more fully, as the complex compound *multiple endocrine neoplasia type 1 syndrome → sindrom de neoplazie multiplă endocrină de tip 1 (MEN1).* This condition is also referred to by the eponymic structure *Wermer syndrome*, named after the physician who first described it.

6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This paper deals with a selection of medical eponyms and their corresponding descriptive terms, focusing on some illustrative examples from several key specialties. It does not include the eponyms

across all branches of medicine (i.e., hematology, ophthalmology, gastroenterology, respiratory medicine, etc.). Thus, due to scope constraints, certain specialties were not addressed. Further research could expand this analysis to include a more comprehensive inventory of eponymic structures across additional medical fields and explore their origin and usage in other linguistic contexts. Another limitation of this paper is related to the fact that certain anatomical eponyms such as: *Fallopian tubes, Bartholin glands, Broca's area, Wernicke's area*, etc. have been discussed in relation to the specific body system to which they belong, and hence, within the context of the medical specialties that deal with the conditions or diseases related to that system (i.e. the reproductive system → gynecology; the nervous system→ neurology; psychiatry). This decision was made in order to reflect the practical and clinical relevance of these terms.

7. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to bring a comparative and applied dimension to medical eponyms, by analyzing them from multiple angles: categorizing them by field (e.g., anatomy, cardiology, endocrinology, gynecology, neurology, psychiatry, surgery), commenting on their origin, analyzing them linguistically, as well as offering insights into usage and non-usage in clinical and academic settings. The findings suggest that eponyms remain a stable feature of medical discourse. In Romania, medical content written by doctors to facilitate understanding among laypeople, on platforms like Regina Maria and MedLife, includes both eponymic structures and descriptive terminology. This approach enhances both precision and accessibility of medical content, supporting patient understanding and, at the same time, preserving professional terminology. In exploring the patterns of use and representation of medical eponyms across specialties, it becomes clear that educating future healthcare professionals on the origins and meanings of these terms is of particular relevance. Medical eponyms and their descriptive terms are frequently used in various medical texts, and their effective use requires both linguistic clarity and cultural awareness. We consider that integrating the study of eponyms into medical education will lead to a deeper understanding of the field and develop students' ability to navigate terminology across specialties.

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