CRStar Insights

NAACCR Recommended Abbreviations for Recording Text

The purpose of this Insight is to address using abbreviations in text and how using the proper abbreviations can impact and aid in selecting text in populations for reports in CRStar. Abstractors utilize abbreviations when recording text in the abstract to save time. This is an accepted practice by the standard setters. However, abbreviations can vary between different facilities and even within different departments in the same facility.

NAACCR developed a listing of recommended abbreviations and symbols for Cancer Registrars to be used when abstracting, reporting, and submitting data. This list can be found in the NAACCR Data Dictionary: Appendix G. http://datadictionary.naaccr.org/default.aspx?c=17&Version=21

This list consists of the most commonly used abbreviations and symbols. The list does not contain abbreviations for chemotherapy drugs and regimens. Please refer to the SEER*Rx database for those abbreviations. Note: The SEER*Rx database is now available in two formats. The first format is the downloadable version that is either downloaded to the computer or available in ERS using the web links feature. According to SEER, this version may be phased out in the future. The second and newest version is a web-based version and can be accessed from the SEER website at https://seer.cancer.gov/seertools/seerrx/

There are several advantages to using the web version. These are taken from the SEER website: Updates are automatic: users do not have to install anything to access the latest revisions. Allows access from any computer or device with an Internet connection. Eliminates problems for users who do not have permission to install software on their work computers.

The abbreviations are listed in upper case. However, upper, or lower case can be used. Always refer to the state central registry requirements on using upper or lower case when abstracting. In CRStar, populations of cases can be selected based on complete or partial words in any of the text fields and various reports can be run on these populations. Therefore, it is very important that all abstractors in the facility use the same abbreviations. Please see page 3 on selecting text in populations for reporting.
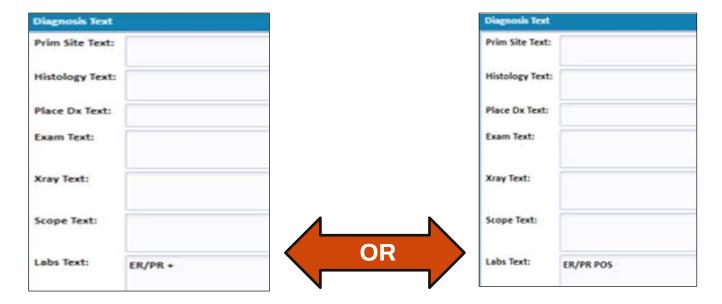
Some recommended abbreviations have more than one accepted abbreviation - some abbreviations have one in text as well as a symbol. For example, below uses the term "positive". There are two acceptable NAACCR abbreviations, POS and (+).

For consistency in selecting cases in populations, for example, that are ER/PR "positive", ensure that all abstractors are using the same abbreviation. Below is an example of using the abbreviation POS and selecting breast cases for a given year that have ER/PR POS and ER/PR + recorded in the Lab Text field. The example below shows how to select both text fields. Using the comma "," no space

between the different text will select both of the text. This would not have been necessary if all the abstractors were consistent in the text field.

Using the asterisks (**) is an easy way to search for specific words or phrases in text fields. By asking for a word, partial word or abbreviation enclosed in asterisks, the system will do a search based on the word. When selecting text from any text fields, the asterisks are wild cards and may be used. For example, Item #855 is used to select text remarks for the Lab text field. This will search for any text containing ER/PR POS anywhere it may be located within the text field. Below are examples of the use of asterisks (*) in reports. For more information, refer to the CRStar User Manual.
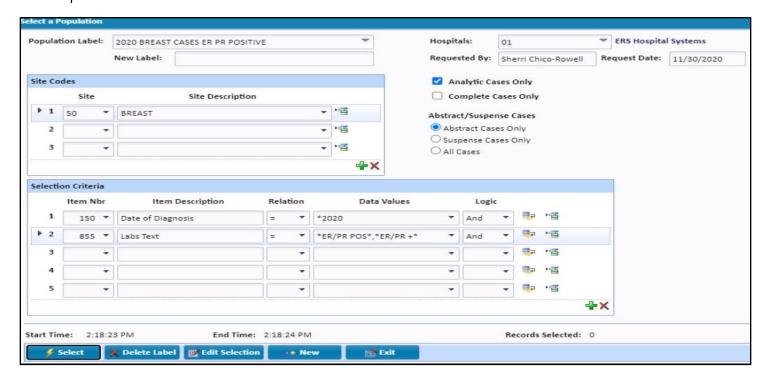

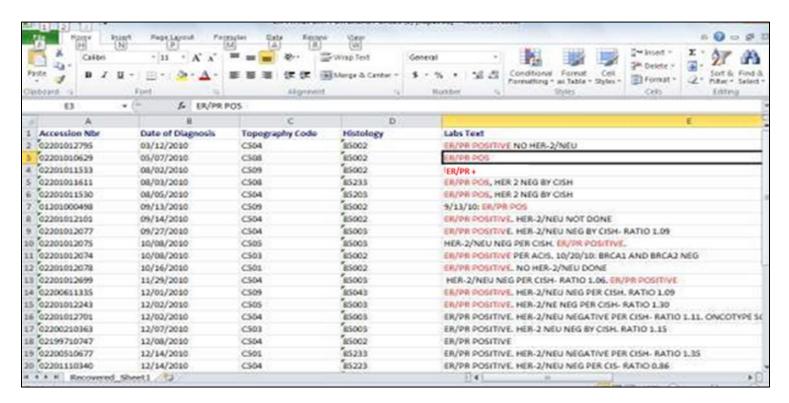*Left asterisk before the number will give all values ending with a specific value, i.e.
   *2020 would give all dates ending with 2020.
*Right asterisk after the number will give all values beginning with a specific value, i.e.
   SMITH* will search for all last names SMITH.
** Both asterisks surround the value, i.e. *ER/PR POS*

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As seen in the report example below, all entries in the Lab Text field contain the text requested in the population, ER/PR POS as well as ER/PR +. POSITIVE, since the word positive contains the requested root POS.

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