



NEWSLETTER #138 April 2025 See [ABOUT](#) WIKISTIM

Pro Quo Quid

The [Glossary](#) we maintain on this website represents our commitment to clear and unambiguous communication in the multidisciplinary field of neuromodulation. We were reminded of the need for continued vigilance by the publication last month in *Regional Anesthesia & Pain Medicine* of an otherwise well-written, thoughtful review with the awkward title "Spinal cord stimulation trial-to-implant ratios: relic or requisite?" (citation available upon request).

When we express a ratio, the first word is normally the numerator and the second the denominator, e.g., signal-to-noise, price-to-earnings, miles per hour. For many years, however, the phrase "trial to implant ratio" has, on occasion, been used in error when "implant to trial ratio," its reciprocal (i.e., opposite) was intended. When trials are required, the number of implants can, of course, never exceed the number of trials, but a careless choice of words can nevertheless indicate (absurdly) that that was the case.

A Google Scholar search for "trial to implant ratio" AND "spinal cord stimulation" reveals that this terminology has been used 44 times altogether, 5 times in 2024-5. Nearly all of these publications used it incorrectly, with values imponderable less than 1, indicating fewer trials than implants.

Several unambiguous alternative phrases have also been used, among which "trial success rate" has been the most popular (we found this 104 times in our Google Scholar search). This might introduce imprecision, however, as not all successful trials are followed by implantation. Less popular but more precise are "implant-to-trial ratio" (12 times) and "trial-to-implant conversion rate" (5 times).

Even when less ambiguous terminology is used, however, subsequent publications might reference it incorrectly: for example, "trial-to-permanent conversion rates" ([Murphy et al., 2017](#)) has been later misquoted as "trial-to-implant ratio" (citation available upon request).

Some of our readers will recall discussion of the phrase "trial-to-implant ratio" in decades past. Each time the flaws of this phrase have been pointed out, they have been acknowledged as obvious, and the language has been reversed or revised; but authors, peer reviewers, and editors have repeatedly reverted. Flawed terminology in health care remains all too common and deserves our diligent attention ([Sarwani et al., 2019](#)).

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Strange Coincidence

Last month, we experienced one of life's little ironies. As we have repeatedly reported, the continued existence of WIKISTIM depends upon donations from individuals and grants from organizations interested in neuromodulation. (A list of all of our donors over time is available [here](#)--recent donors are listed below.) In February, we sent in two grant applications to large companies that sell neurostimulation equipment, and we got a flat-out rejection from one (the other is pending). Right on the heels of that rejection, we received a very nice email from a "senior scientist" who works for the company that refused our request for support. This scientist said that this newsletter is "a great resource for us" and asked me to add a few people to the email list (of course, people have to add themselves, which is an easy process). I had received a similar email from another scientist working at the same company, also describing WIKISTIM as a "great resource," last June when a hitch in our computer program inadvertently unsubscribed a host of people. So, a major neurostimulation company that employs at least two scientists who definitely don't want to see this newsletter disappear (among 35 who used that company's email server when they subscribed to WIKISTIM) has not been able to see its way clear to supporting our work. If YOU value WIKISTIM and find this newsletter a "great resource," PLEASE support us with a donation and by telling the decision makers at your company that we deserve to have our grant applications considered favorably. We want to be able to continue this work without charging for subscriptions and without the intrusion of advertisements.

One Person to Thank this Month!

Our donor hero this month is SuEarl McReynolds, who is a repeat donor and first used WIKISTIM to successfully convince an insurance company to cover cervical spinal cord stimulation for her daughter. We thank Ms. McReynolds for her loyal support!

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Citations Added From Search on April 7, 2025

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We remind our readers that it might be necessary to click “View Entire Message” in our email to see all of the citation lists in this newsletter.

We list correction citations only if the error was substantial. For small changes, such as a missing initial in an author's name, we simply update the WIKISTIM database.

Deep Brain Stimulation (now 8941 citations)

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The Neuromodulation Foundation, Inc.
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