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**a- (an-)** *prefix denoting absence of; lacking; not.*

**AA** *n. see ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS.*

**AAA** *n. see (ABDOMINAL AORTIC) ANEURYSM.*

**A and E medicine** *n. accident and emergency medicine: an important specialty dealing with the immediate problems of the acutely ill and injured.*

**ab-** *prefix denoting away from.*

**abarticulation** [ab-ar-tik-yoo-lay-shōn] *n.* **1.** the dislocation of a joint. **2.** a synovial joint (*see* DIARTHROSIS).

**abbreviated injury scale** [a-bree-vi-ay-tid] *n.* a quick method for determining the severity of a case of serious trauma. It can be used for purposes of triage and clinical audit.

**abdomen** [ab-dōm-ēn] *n.* the part of the body cavity below the chest (*see* THORAX), from which it is separated by the diaphragm. The abdomen contains the organs of digestion (stomach, liver, intestines, etc.), excretion (kidneys, bladder, etc.), and in women reproduction (ovaries and uterus). It is lined by a membrane, the peritoneum. —**abdominal** [ab-dōm-i-nāl] *adj.*

**abdominal thrusts (Heimlich manoeuvre)** *pl. n.* a manoeuvre for the treatment of choking in which the patient is held firmly around the midriff just under the ribcage. The hands of the rescuer are held as a fist and short sharp thrusts into the patient's upper abdomen are made in order to dislodge the obstructing article from the airway. This procedure should not be performed on children under the age of one year.

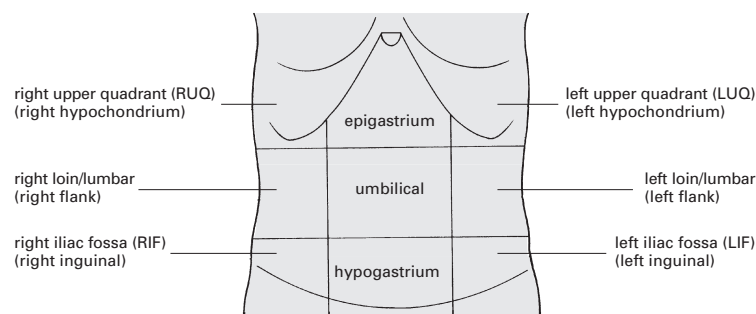
**abdominoperineal excision** [āb-dōm-in-oh-pe-ri-nee-āl] *n.* an operation for excision of the rectum in which incisions are made in both the abdomen and the perineum.

**abducens nerve** [āb-dew-sēnz] *n.* the sixth cranial nerve (VI), which supplies the lateral rectus muscle of each eyeball.

**abduct** [āb-duk-t] *vb.* to move a limb or any other part away from the midline of the body. —**abduction** *n.*

**abductor** [āb-duk-ter] *n.* any muscle that, when it contracts, moves one part of the body away from another or from the midline of the body. Abductors work antagonistically with adductors.

**aberrant** [ā-b'e-rānt] *adj.* abnormal: usu-



Regions of the abdomen

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ally applied to a blood vessel or nerve that does not follow its normal course.

**aberration** [ab-er-ay-shōn] *n.* **1.** deviation from the normal. **2.** a defect in the image formed by a lens. **chromatic a.** a defect in which the image has coloured fringes as a result of the different extent to which light of different colours is refracted. **spherical a.** a defect in which the image is blurred because curvature of the lens causes light rays from the object to come to a focus in slightly different positions.

**ABGs** *pl. n. see* ARTERIAL BLOOD GASES.

**ablation** [āb-lay-shōn] *n.* the removal or destruction of tissue, a part of the body, or an abnormal growth by surgery, hormonal or other drugs, or heat. **radiofrequency a.** the destruction of abnormal conducting tissue in the heart in patients with supraventricular tachycardia by the use of radiofrequency energy delivered via catheter under X-ray and electrocardiographic guidance. *See also* ENDOMETRIAL (ABLATION).

**abnormal** [ab-nor-māl] *adj.* deviating from the normal in structure, position, occurrence, etc. (e.g. **a. growth**).

**abnormality** [ab-nor-mal-iti] *n.* **1.** deviation from the normal or expected. **2.** a malformation or deformity (e.g. **developmental a.**).

**abort** [ā-bort] *vb.* **1.** to terminate a process or disease before its full course has been run. **2.** to remove or expel an embryo or fetus from the uterus before it is capable of independent existence. *See* ABORTION.

**abortifacient** [ā-bor-ti-fay-shēnt] *n.* a drug that induces abortion or miscarriage.

**abortion** [ā-bor-shōn] *n.* **1. (induced abortion, termination of pregnancy)** the removal of an embryo or fetus from the uterus at a stage of pregnancy when it is deemed incapable of independent survival (i.e. at any time between conception and the 24th week of pregnancy). In the UK the procedure must be carried out within the terms of the Abortion Act 1967 and Abortion Regulations 1991. **2. (spontaneous abortion)** *see* MISCARRIAGE. —**abortive** *adj.*

 **SEE WEB LINKS**

- Explanation of induced abortion from Marie Stopes International UK

**abortus** [ā-bor-tūs] *n.* a fetus, weighing less than 500 g, that is expelled from the uterus either dead or incapable of surviving.

**ABO system** *n. see* BLOOD GROUP.

**ABPI** *n. see* ANKLE-BRACHIAL PRESSURE INDEX.

**abrasion** [ā-bray-zhōn] *n.* a minor wound in which the surface of the skin or a mucous membrane is worn away by rubbing or scraping.

**abreaction** [ab-ree-ak-shōn] *n.* the release of strong emotion commonly associated with a buried memory. Abreaction may be induced as a treatment for conversion disorder, anxiety state, and other neurotic conditions.

**abruptio placentae (placental abruptio)** [ā-brup-ti-oh plā-sent-i] *n.* bleeding from the placenta causing its complete or partial detachment from the uterine wall after the 24th week of gestation. Abruptio placentae is often associated with hypertension and pre-eclampsia.

**abscess** [ab-sis] *n.* a collection of pus and necrotic tissue enclosed by damaged and inflamed tissues. **acute a.** an abscess associated with pain, inflammation, and some fever. **apical a.** an abscess in the bone around the tip of the root of a tooth. **Brodie's a.** a chronic abscess of bone that develops from acute bacterial osteomyelitis. **cerebral a.** an abscess resulting from infection of the brain or its meninges. **cold or chronic a.** an abscess, usually due to tuberculosis bacilli, in which there is little pain or inflammation. **psoas a.** a cold abscess in the psoas muscle (in the groin), which has spread from diseased vertebrae in the lower part of the spine. **subphrenic a.** an abscess in the space below the diaphragm, usually resulting from a spread of infection from the abdomen. **tropical (or amoebic) a.** an abscess of the liver caused by infection with *Entamoeba histolytica*. *See also* ISCHIORECTAL ABSCESS.

**absence** [ab-sēns] *n.* (in neurology) *see* EPILEPSY.

**absorption** [äb-sorp-shön] *n.* the uptake of digested food from the intestine into the blood and lymphatic systems. *See also* ASSIMILATION, DIGESTION.

**a.c. (ante cibum)** Latin: before food, used as a direction in prescriptions.

**acanthosis** [ak-än-thoh-sis] *n.* an increase in the number of prickle cells in the innermost layer of the epidermis, leading to thickening of the epidermis. **a. nigricans** acanthosis associated with insulin resistance and overweight, characterized by papillomatous growths, mainly in the armpits, neck, and groin, which give the skin a pigmented appearance and a velvety texture. It may be benign or malignant.

**acapnia (hypocapnia)** [ä-kap-niä] *n.* a condition in which there is an abnormally low concentration of carbon dioxide in the blood.

**acarbose** [ass-ar-bohz] *n.* an oral hypoglycaemic drug that reduces the breakdown and absorption of carbohydrates in the intestine by blocking the action of an important enzyme ( $\alpha$ -glucosidase) in this process. Trade name: **Glucobay**.

**acardia** [ay-kar-diä] *n.* congenital absence of the heart. The condition may occur in conjoined twins; the twin with the heart controls the circulation for both.

**acarriasis** [akä-ry-ä-sis] *n.* an infestation of mites and ticks.

**acaricide** [ä-ka-ri-syd] *n.* any chemical agent used for destroying mites and ticks.

**acatalasia** [ä-kat-ä-lay-zia] *n.* a rare in-born lack of the enzyme catalase, leading to recurrent infections of the gums (gingivitis) and mouth.

**accessory muscles** [äk-sess-er-i] *pl. n.* muscles of the shoulder girdle and chest wall that (in addition to the intercostal muscles and the diaphragm) are utilized by people with respiratory distress to help the flow of air in and out of the lungs.

**accessory nerve (spinal accessory nerve)** *n.* the eleventh cranial nerve (XI), which arises from two roots, cranial and spinal. Fibres from the cranial root form the recurrent laryngeal nerve, which supplies the internal laryngeal muscles; fibres from

the spinal root supply the sternomastoid and trapezius muscles, in the neck region.

**accident** [ak-sid-ënt] *n.* a traumatic incident involving any part of the body. **Accident and emergency (A and E) medicine** is a specialized area of patient care dealing with acute illness.

**accommodation** [ä-kom-ö-day-shön] *n.* adjustment of the shape of the lens to change the focus of the eye. When the ciliary muscle (*see* CILIARY BODY) is relaxed, the lens is flattened and the eye is then able to focus on distant objects. To focus the eye on near objects the ciliary muscles contract and the lens becomes more spherical. **a. reflex** the constriction of the pupils and inward turning of the eyes that occur when an individual focuses on a near object.

**accouchement** [ä-koosh-mahnt] *n.* delivery of a baby.

**accountability** [ä-kownt-ä-bil-iti] *n.* (in nursing) the obligation of being answerable for one's own judgments and actions to an appropriate person or authority recognized as having the right to demand information and explanation, according to the terms of reference of the NMC Code of Professional Conduct (*see* Appendix 15). A registered practitioner (nurse, midwife, health visitor) is accountable for her or his actions as a professional at all times, on or off duty, whether engaged in current practice or not.

**accreditation** [ä-kred-i-tay-shön] *n.* **1.** formal recognition by an organization of an individual as an approved and acknowledged representative, e.g. of a union or staff organization. **2.** (in the USA, Australasia, and some European countries) the licensing of a hospital by government agencies, subject to its meeting certain prerequisite conditions.

**Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning** *n. see* APEL.

**accretion** [ä-kree-shön] *n.* the accumulation of deposits in an organ or cavity. Calculi may be formed by accretion.

**acebutolol** [ass-i-bew-toh-lol] *n.* a beta blocker drug used to treat high blood pressure, angina pectoris, and irregular heart rhythms. It is administered by mouth. Trade name: **Sectral**.

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**ACE inhibitor** [ayss] *n.* angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitor: any one of a group of drugs used in the treatment of raised blood pressure and heart failure. ACE inhibitors act by interfering with the action of the enzyme that converts the inactive angiotensin I to the powerful artery constrictor angiotensin II. ACE inhibitors are administered by mouth; they include **perindopril** (Coversyl) and **ramipril** (Trilate). *See also* CAPTOPRIL, ENALAPRIL.

**acephalus** [ā-sef-ā-lūs] *n.* a fetus without a head. —**acephalous** *adj.*

**acetabuloplasty** [ass-i-tab-yoo-loh-plas-ti] *n.* an operation in which the shape of the acetabulum is modified to correct congenital dislocation of the hip or to treat osteoarthritis.

**acetabulum (cotyloid cavity)** [ass-i-tab-yoo-lūm] *n.* (*pl.* **acetabula**) either of the two deep sockets, one on each side of the hip bone, into which the head of the thigh bone (femur) fits at the hip joint.

**acetaminophen** [ass-ee-tā-mīn-ō-fen] *n.* *see* PARACETAMOL.

**acetate** [ass-it-ayt] *n.* any salt or ester of acetic acid.

**acetazolamide** [ass-ee-tā-zol-ā-myd] *n.* a carbonic anhydrase inhibitor used mainly in the treatment of glaucoma to reduce the pressure inside the eyeball and also as a preventative for epileptic seizures and altitude sickness. Trade name: **Diamox**.

**acetic acid** [ā-see-tik] *n.* the acid that is present in vinegar. It is used in the preparation of astringent and antiseptic medicines and in urine testing. Formula: CH<sub>3</sub>COOH.

**acetoacetic acid** [ass-i-toh-ā-see-tik] *n.* an organic acid produced in large amounts by the liver in such conditions as starvation. Formula: CH<sub>3</sub>COCH<sub>2</sub>COOH. *See also* KETONE.

**acetonaemia** [ass-i-toh-nee-miä] *n.* the presence of ketone bodies in the blood. *See* KETONE.

**acetone** [ass-i-tohn] *n.* an organic compound that is produced by the liver in such conditions as starvation. Acetone is of great value as a solvent. Formula: CH<sub>3</sub>COCH<sub>3</sub>. **a. body** *see* KETONE.

**acetonuria** [ass-i-toh-newr-iä] *n.* *see* KETONURIA.

**acetylcholine** [ass-i-tyl-koh-leen] *n.* the acetic acid ester of the organic base choline: the neurotransmitter released at the synapses of parasympathetic nerves and at neuromuscular junctions. *See also* CHOLINESTERASE.

**acetylcholinesterase inhibitor** [ass-i-tyl-koh-lin-est-er-ayz] *n.* a drug that blocks the action of acetylcholinesterase (*see* CHOLINESTERASE). Acetylcholinesterase inhibitors are used to slow down the rate of cognitive decline in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease, which is associated with a reduction in acetylcholine levels. The group includes **donepezil** (Aricept), **galantamine** (Reminyl), and **rivastigmine** (Exelon).

**acetylcoenzyme A** [ass-i-tyl-koh-en-zym] *n.* a compound formed by the combination of an acetate molecule with coenzyme A. Acetylcoenzyme A has an important role in the Krebs cycle.

**acetylcysteine** [ass-i-tyl-sis-ti-een] *n.* a drug that is administered as eye drops for the treatment of dry eyes, as in Sjögren's syndrome; as an intravenous infusion, it is used to prevent liver damage in paracetamol overdose. Trade name: **Ilube**.

**acetylsalicylic acid** [ass-i-tyl-sa-li-sil-ik] *n.* *see* ASPIRIN.

**achalasia (cardiospasm)** [ak-ā-lay-zia] *n.* a condition in which the normal muscular activity of the oesophagus (gullet) is disturbed, especially failure of the abnormally strong cardiac sphincter at the lower end, which delays the passage of swallowed material.

**Achilles tendon** [ā-kil-eez] *n.* the tendon of the muscles of the calf of the leg (the gastrocnemius and soleus muscles), situated at the back of the ankle and attached to the calcaneus (heel bone).

**achillorrhaphy** [ak-i-lo-räfi] *n.* surgical repair of the Achilles tendon.

**achillotomy** [ak-i-lot-ōmi] *n.* surgical division of the Achilles tendon.

**achlorhydria** [ay-klor-hy-driä] *n.* absence of hydrochloric acid in the stomach. It is sometimes associated with pernicious anaemia.

**acholia** [ā-koh-liā] *n.* absence or deficiency of bile secretion or failure of the bile to enter the alimentary canal.

**acholuria** [ak-oh-lewr-iā] *n.* absence of the bile pigments from the urine, which occurs in some forms of jaundice (**acholuric jaundice**). —**acholuric** *adj.*

**achondroplasia** [ā-kon-droh-play-ziā] *n.* a disorder, inherited as a dominant characteristic, in which the bones of the arms and legs fail to grow to normal size. It results in a type of dwarfism characterized by short limbs, a normal-sized head and body, and normal intelligence. —**achondroplastic** [ā-kon-droh-plas-tik] *adj.*

**achromatic** [ak-roh-mat-ik] *adj.* without colour. —**achromasia** [ak-roh-may-ziā] *n.*

**achromatopsia** [ā-kroh-mā-top-siā] *n.* the inability to differentiate different shades of colour. Such complete colour blindness is very rare and is usually determined by hereditary factors.

**achylia** [ā-ky-liā] *n.* absence of secretion. **a. gastrica** a nonsecreting stomach whose lining (mucosa) is atrophied.

**aciclovir (acyclovir)** *n.* [ay-sy-klō-veer] an antiviral drug that inhibits DNA synthesis in cells infected by herpesviruses. Administered topically, by mouth, or intravenously, it is used in the treatment of herpes simplex, herpes zoster, and herpes encephalitis. Trade name: **Zovirax**.

**acid** [ass-id] *n.* a substance that releases hydrogen ions when dissolved in water, has a pH below 7 and turns litmus paper red, and reacts with a base to form a salt and water only. *Compare* BASE.

**acidaemia** [asid-ee-miā] *n.* a condition of abnormally high blood acidity. *See also* ACIDOSIS. *Compare* ALKALAEMIA.

**acid-base balance** *n.* the balance between the amount of carbonic acid and bicarbonate in the blood, which must be maintained at a constant ratio of 1:20 in order to keep the hydrogen ion concentration of the plasma at a constant value (pH 7.4).

**acid-fast** *adj.* **1.** describing bacteria that have been stained and continue to hold the stain after treatment with an acidic solution (**a.-f. bacilli**, **AFB**). **2.** describing a

stain that is not removed from a specimen by washing with an acidic solution.

**acidity** [ā-sid-iti] *n.* the state of being acid. The degree of acidity of a solution is measured on the pH scale (*see* PH).

**acidosis** [asid-oh-sis] *n.* a condition in which the acidity of body fluids and tissues is abnormally high. This arises because of a failure of the mechanisms responsible for maintaining a balance between acids and alkalis in the blood (*see* ACID-BASE BALANCE). *See also* KETOACIDOSIS, LACTIC ACIDOSIS. —**acidotic** [asid-ot-ik] *adj.*

**acid phosphatase** *n.* an enzyme secreted in the seminal fluid by the prostate gland.

**acinus** [ass-in-ūs] *n.* (*pl.* **acini**) **1.** a small sac or cavity surrounded by the secretory cells of a gland. **2.** (in the lung) the tissue supplied with air by one terminal bronchiole. —**acinous** *adj.*

**acne (acne vulgaris)** [ak-ni vul-gar-iss] *n.* a common inflammatory disorder of the sebaceous glands. It involves the face, back, and chest and is characterized by the presence of blackheads with papules, pustules, and – in more severe cases – cysts and scars. Mild cases respond to topical therapy with benzoyl peroxide; treatment for more refractory conditions includes long-term antibiotics and isotretinoin.

**acoustic** [ā-koo-stik] *adj.* of or relating to sound or the sense of hearing. **a. nerve** *see* COCHLEAR NERVE. **a. neuroma** *see* (VESTIBULAR) SCHWANNOMA.

**acquired** [ā-kwyrd] *adj.* describing a condition or disorder contracted after birth and not attributable to hereditary causes. *Compare* CONGENITAL.

**acquired immune deficiency syndrome** *n.* *see* AIDS.

**acrivastine** [ak-ri-vas-teen] *n.* an antihistamine drug used to treat hay fever and urticaria (nettle rash). It is administered by mouth.

**acro-** *combining form denoting* **1.** extremity; tip. **2.** height; promontory. **3.** extreme; intense.

**acrocentric** [ak-roh-sen-trik] *n.* a chromosome in which the centromere is situ-

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ated at or very near one end. —**acrocentric** *adj.*

**acrocyanosis** [ak-roh-sy-ă-noh-sis] *n.* bluish-purple discoloration of the hands and feet due to slow circulation of the blood through the small vessels in the skin.

**acrodermatitis enteropathica** [ak-roh-der-mă-ty-tis en-ter-oh-path-ikă] *n.* an inherited inability to absorb sufficient zinc, which causes poor growth, patchy sparse hair, a generalized skin rash, and chronic diarrhoea.

**acrodynia** [ak-roh-din-iă] *n.* *see* PINK DISEASE.

**acromegaly** [ak-roh-meg-ăli] *n.* overgrowth of soft tissues and bones due to excessive secretion of growth hormone, usually by a benign tumour of the anterior pituitary gland.

**acromion** [ă-kroh-mi-ön] *n.* an oblong process at the top of the spine of the scapula, part of which articulates with the clavicle (collar bone) to form the **acromioclavicular joint**. —**acromial** *adj.*

**acronyx** [ak-rö-niks] *n.* an ingrowing toenail or fingernail. *See* INGROWING TOENAIL.

**acroparaesthesiae** [ak-roh-pa-ris-theez-i-ee] *pl. n.* tingling sensations in the hands and feet.

**acrophobia** [ak-rö-foh-biă] *n.* a morbid dread of heights.

**acrosclerosis** [ak-roh-sklee-oh-sis] *n.* a skin disease thought to be a type of generalized scleroderma, causing stiffness of the skin mainly affecting the hands, face, and feet.

**acrosome** [ak-rö-sohm] *n.* the caplike structure on the front end of a spermatozoon.

**ACTH** (adrenocorticotrophic hormone, adrenocorticotrophin, corticotrophin) *n.* a hormone synthesized and stored in the anterior pituitary gland, controlling the secretion of corticosteroid hormones from the adrenal gland. Its release is stimulated by corticotrophin-releasing hormone.

**actin** [ak-tin] *n.* a protein, found in muscle, that plays an important role in the process of contraction. *See* STRIATED MUSCLE.

**Actinomyces** [ak-ti-noh-my-seez] *n.* a genus of Gram-positive nonmotile fungus-like bacteria that cause disease in animals and humans. **A. israelii** the causative organism of human actinomycosis.

**actinomycin D** [ak-ti-noh-my-sin] *n.* *see* DACTINOMYCIN.

**actinomycosis** [ak-ti-noh-my-koh-sis] *n.* a noncontagious disease caused by the bacterium *Actinomyces israelii* and resulting in the formation of multiple sinus tracts that open onto the skin. Actinomycosis most commonly affects the jaw but may also affect the lungs, brain, or intestines.

**actinotherapy** [ak-ti-noh-th'e-ră-pi] *n.* the treatment of disorders with infrared or ultraviolet radiation.

**action potential** [ak-shön] *n.* the change in voltage that occurs across the membrane of a nerve or muscle cell when a nerve impulse is triggered.

**activator** [ak-ti-vay-ter] *n.* a substance that stimulates a chemical change or reaction.

**active movement** [ak-tiv] *n.* movement brought about by a patient's own efforts. *Compare* PASSIVE MOVEMENT.

**active principle** *n.* an ingredient of a drug that is actively involved in its therapeutic effect.

**activities of daily living (activities of living, ADLs, ALs)** [ak-tiv-it-iz] *pl. n.* the routine activities that an individual does for himself during the course of the day, such as eating, drinking, and washing. *See* ROPER, LOGAN, AND TIERNEY MODEL.

**actomyosin** [ak-toh-my-oh-sin] *n.* a protein complex formed in muscle between actin and myosin during the process of contraction. *See* STRIATED MUSCLE.

**acuity** [ă-kew-iti] *n.* *see* VISUAL ACUITY.

**acupuncture** [ak-yoo-punk-cher] *n.* a complementary therapy, developed by Eastern physicians, in which thin metal needles are inserted into selected points beneath the skin. It is used to relieve the symptoms of a wide range of physical and psychological conditions.

 SEE WEB LINKS

- Website of the British Acupuncture

Council, the UK's main regulatory body for the practice of acupuncture

**acute** [ā-kewt] *adj.* **1.** describing a disease of rapid onset, severe symptoms, and brief duration. *Compare* CHRONIC. **2.** describing any intense symptom, such as severe pain.

**acute abdomen** *n.* an emergency surgical condition caused by damage to one or more abdominal organs following injury or disease.

**acute rheumatism** *n.* *see* RHEUMATIC FEVER.

**acyclovir** *n.* *see* ACICLOVIR.

**acystia** [ā-sis-tiā] *n.* congenital absence of the bladder.

**ad-** *prefix denoting towards or near.*

**ADA deficiency** *n.* *see* ADENOSINE DEAMINASE DEFICIENCY.

**Adam's apple (laryngeal prominence)** [ad-āmz] *n.* a projection, lying just under the skin, of the thyroid cartilage of the larynx.

**adaptation** [ad-āp-tay-shōn] *n.* **1.** the phenomenon in which a sense organ shows a gradually diminishing response to continuous or repetitive stimulation. **2.** a process of change to enable adjustment to a condition or an environment.

**addiction** [ā-dik-shōn] *n.* a state of dependence produced either by the habitual taking of drugs or by regularly engaging in certain behaviours (e.g. gambling). *See also* ALCOHOLISM, TOLERANCE.

**Addisonian crisis** [ad-i-soh-niān] *n.* an acute medical emergency due to a lack of corticosteroid production by the body, caused by disease of the adrenal glands or long-term suppression of production by steroid medication. It manifests as low blood pressure and collapse, biochemical abnormalities, hypoglycaemia, and (if untreated) coma and death. [T. Addison (1793–1860), British physician]

**Addison's disease** [ad-i-sōnz] *n.* a syndrome due to inadequate secretion of corticosteroid hormones by the adrenal glands. Symptoms include progressive deterioration, low blood pressure, and dark pigmentation of the skin. [T. Addison]

**adduct** [ā-dukht] *vb.* to move a limb or any other part towards the midline of the body. —**adduction** *n.*

**adductor** [ā-duk-ter] *n.* any muscle that moves one part of the body towards another or towards the midline of the body.

**aden- (adeno-)** *combining form denoting a gland or glands.*

**adenine** [ad-ē-neen] *n.* one of the nitrogen-containing bases (*see* PURINE) that occurs in the nucleic acids DNA and RNA. *See also* ATP.

**adenitis** [ad-ē-ny-tis] *n.* inflammation of one or more glands or lymph nodes.

**adenocarcinoma** [ad-in-oh-kar-si-noh-mā] *n.* (*pl.* **adenocarcinomata**) a malignant epithelial tumour arising from glandular tissue. The term is also applied to tumours showing a glandular growth pattern.

**adenohypophysis** [ad-in-oh-hy-pof-i-sis] *n.* *see* PITUITARY GLAND.

**adenoidectomy** [ad-in-oid-ek-tōmi] *n.* surgical removal of the adenoids.

**adenoids (nasopharyngeal tonsil)** [ad-in-oidz] *n.* a collection of lymphatic tissue in the nasopharynx. Enlargement of the adenoids can cause obstruction to breathing through the nose and can block the Eustachian tubes, causing glue ear.

**adenolymphoma** [ad-in-oh-lim-foh-mā] *n.* *see* WARTHIN'S TUMOUR.

**adenoma** [ad-in-oh-mā] *n.* (*pl.* **adenomata**) a benign tumour of epithelial origin that is derived from glandular tissue or exhibits clearly defined glandular structures. Adenomas may become malignant (*see* ADENOCARCINOMA).

**adenomyoma** [ad-in-oh-my-oh-mā] *n.* a benign tumour derived from glandular and muscular tissue. Adenomyomas frequently occur in the uterus.

**adenomyosis** [ad-in-oh-my-oh-sis] *n.* the infiltration of tissue resembling endometrium into the wall of the uterus. *See* ENDOMETRIOSIS.

**adenopathy** [ad-in-op-āthi] *n.* disease of a gland or glandlike structure, especially a lymph node.

**adenosclerosis** [ad-in-oh-skleeer-oh-sis]

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*n.* hardening of a gland, usually due to calcification.

**adenosine** [ă-den-ō-seen] *n.* a compound containing adenine and the sugar ribose: it occurs in ATP (*see also* NUCLEOSIDE). It is also injected as an anti-arrhythmic drug to stop supraventricular tachycardias and restore a normal heart rhythm.

**adenosine deaminase deficiency (ADA deficiency)** [dee-am-in-ayz] *n.* a genetic disorder characterized by a defect in the enzyme **adenosine deaminase (ADA)**, which is involved in purine metabolism. Deficiency of this enzyme results in damage to the antibody-producing lymphocytes, which leads to severe combined immune deficiency (SCID).

**adenosine diphosphate** *n. see* ADP.

**adenosine monophosphate** *n. see* AMP.

**adenosine triphosphate** *n. see* ATP.

**adenosis** [ad-in-oh-sis] *n.* (*pl.* **adenoses**) **1.** excessive growth or development of glands. **2.** any disease of a gland or gland-like structure, especially of a lymph node.

**adenovirus** [ad-in-oh-vy-rūs] *n.* one of a group of DNA-containing viruses causing infections of the upper respiratory tract that produce symptoms resembling those of the common cold.

**ADH** *n.* antidiuretic hormone (*see* VASOPRESSIN).

**ADHD** *n. see* ATTENTION-DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER.

**adhesion** [ăd-hee-zhōn] *n.* **1.** the union of two normally separate surfaces by fibrous connective tissue developing in an inflamed or damaged region. (The fibrous tissue itself is also called an adhesion.) Adhesions between loops of intestine often occur following abdominal surgery but only rarely cause symptoms, such as intestinal obstruction. **2.** a healing process in which the edges of a wound fit together.

**adiadochokinesis** [ă-dy-ă-doh-koh-ki-nee-sis] *n. see* DYSADIADOCHOKINESIS.

**adiaphoresis** [ă-dy-ă-fō-ree-sis] *n.* deficient or reduced secretion of sweat. —**adiaphoretic** [ă-dy-ă-fō-ret-ik] *adj.*

**Adie's pupil** [ay-diz] *n. see* TONIC (PUPIL). [W. J. Adie (1886–1935), British physician]

**adipose tissue** [ad-i-pohs] *n.* fibrous connective tissue packed with masses of fat cells. It forms a thick layer under the skin and occurs around the kidneys and in the buttocks.

**adiposis (liposis)** [ad-i-poh-sis] *n.* the presence of abnormally large accumulations of fat in the body. The condition may arise from overeating, hormone irregularities, or a metabolic disorder. *See also* OBESITY.

**adiposuria** [ad-i-poh-sewr-iā] *n. see* LIPURIA.

**aditus** [ad-i-tūs] *n.* an anatomical opening or passage; for example, the opening of the tympanic cavity (middle ear) to the air spaces of the mastoid process.

**adjunct** [aj-unkt] *n.* a subsidiary drug used in treating a disorder, which is administered in conjunction with, and provides additional benefits to, the main drug used in treatment. —**adjunctive** [ă-junktiv] *adj.*

**adjuvant** [aj-oo-vănt] *n.* any substance used in conjunction with another to enhance its activity.

**adjuvant therapy** *n.* treatment given to cancer patients, usually after surgical removal of their primary tumour when there is known to be a high risk of future tumour recurrence. *Compare* NEOADJUVANT CHEMOTHERAPY.

**ADLs** *pl. n. see* ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING.

**admission rate** [ăd-mish-ōn] *n.* the number of cases of a specified disease or condition admitted to hospitals, related to the population of a given geographical area.

**adnexa** [ad-neks-ă] *pl. n.* adjoining parts. **uterine a.** the Fallopian tubes and ovaries.

**adolescence** [ad-ō-less-ēns] *n.* the period of development between childhood and adulthood. It begins with the start of puberty. —**adolescent** *n., adj.*

**ADP (adenosine diphosphate)** *n.* a compound containing adenine, ribose, and two phosphate groups. ADP occurs in cells and is involved in processes requiring the transfer of energy (*see* ATP).

**adrenalectomy** [ä-dree-näl-ek-tōmi] *n.* surgical removal of an adrenal gland, usually performed because of cancer.

**adrenal glands (suprarenal glands)** [ä-dree-näl] *pl. n.* two triangular endocrine glands, each of which covers the superior surface of a kidney. The **medulla** forms the grey core of the gland and produces adrenaline and noradrenaline. The **cortex** is a yellowish tissue surrounding the medulla; it produces corticosteroid hormones.

**adrenaline (epinephrine)** [ä-dren-ä-lin] *n.* an important hormone secreted by the medulla of the adrenal gland. It has widespread effects on circulation, the muscles, and sugar metabolism. The action of the heart is increased, the rate and depth of breathing are increased, and the metabolic rate is raised; the force of muscular contraction improves and the onset of muscular fatigue is delayed. At the same time the blood supply to the bladder and intestines is reduced, their muscular walls relax, and the sphincters contract. Adrenaline is administered by injection for the emergency treatment of anaphylaxis and cardiac arrest. It is also included in some local anaesthetic solutions, particularly those used in dentistry, to prolong anaesthesia, and is used as eye drops in treating glaucoma.

**adrenarche** [ad-ren-ar-ki] *n.* the start of secretion of androgens by the adrenal glands, occurring at around 6–7 years of age in girls and 7–8 in boys. Adrenal androgens are dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA), DHEA sulphate, and androstenedione. *Compare* GONADARCHE.

**adrenergic** [ad-rē-ner-jik] *adj.* describing or relating to nerve fibres that release noradrenaline as a neurotransmitter. **a. receptor (adrenoceptor)** any of the receptors that are stimulated by noradrenaline and/or adrenaline, of which there are two types, alpha ( $\alpha$ ) and beta ( $\beta$ ), each with subtypes ( $\alpha_1$ ,  $\alpha_2$ ,  $\beta_1$ , and  $\beta_2$ ). *Compare* CHOLINERGIC.

**adrenoceptor** [ä-dree-noh-sep-ter] *n.* *see* ADRENERGIC (RECEPTOR).

**adrenocorticotrophic hormone (adrenocorticotrophin)** [ä-dree-noh-kor-ti-koh-trof-ik] *n.* *see* ACTH.

**adrenogenital syndrome** [ä-dree-noh-jen-it-äl] *n.* a hormonal disorder resulting from abnormal steroid production by the adrenal cortex, due to a genetic fault. It may cause masculinization in girls, precocious puberty in boys, and adrenocortical failure (*see* ADDISON'S DISEASE) in both sexes. Treatment is by lifelong steroid replacement.

**adrenoleukodystrophy (ALD)** [ä-dree-noh-loo-koh-dis-trō-fi] *n.* a genetically determined condition of neurological degeneration with childhood and adult forms. Inherited as an X-linked (*see* SEX-LINKED) trait resulting in demyelination, it is characterized by progressive spastic paralysis of the legs and sensory loss, associated with adrenal gland insufficiency and small gonads.

**adrenolytic** [ä-dree-noh-lit-ik] *adj.* inhibiting the activity of adrenergic nerves. Adrenolytic activity is opposite to that of noradrenaline.

**ADRs** *pl. n.* adverse drug reactions. *See* SIDE-EFFECT.

**adsorbent** [äd-sor-bēnt] *n.* a substance that attracts other substances to its surface to form a film. Charcoal and kaolin are adsorbents.

**adsorption** [äd-sorp-shōn] *n.* the formation of a layer of atoms or molecules of one substance on the surface of a solid or liquid of different substance. *See* ADSORBENT.

**adult respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS)** [äd-ult] *n.* a form of acute respiratory failure that occurs after a precipitating event, such as trauma, aspiration, or inhalation of a toxic substance; it is particularly associated with septic shock.

**advance decision or statement** [äd-vahns] *n.* a legally recognized decision or statement made by a mentally capable adult that identifies any specific or general treatments the patient does not want in the event that he or she loses mental capacity. An **advance decision** is very specific and must be shown to be valid and applicable to the medical situation that arises (*see also* LIVING WILL). An **advance statement** is more general, indicating the sort of treatment the patient may or may not wish to undergo, and (under the Mental

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Capacity Act 2005) is less legally binding than a decision.

**advanced life support (ALS)** [ăd-vahnst] *n.* a structured and algorithm-driven method of life support for use in the severest of medical emergencies, especially cardiac arrest. Personnel involved in ALS receive special training in the use of equipment (e.g. defibrillators and appropriate drugs). *Compare* BASIC LIFE SUPPORT.

**advanced trauma life support** *n.* *see* ATLS.

**advancement** [ăd-vahnsm-ment] *n.* the detachment by surgery of a muscle, musculocutaneous flap, or tendon and its reattachment at a more advanced (anterior) point while preserving its previous nerve and blood supply. The technique is used, for example, in the treatment of squint, and extensively in plastic surgery.

**adventitia (tunica adventitia)** [ad-ven-ti-shă] *n.* **1.** the outer coat of the wall of a vein or artery. **2.** the outer covering of various other organs or parts.

**adventitious** [ad-ven-ti-shūs] *adj.* **1.** occurring in a place other than the usual one. **2.** relating to the adventitia.

**advocate** [ad-vō-kăt] *n.* (in health care) a practitioner, usually a nurse, who utilizes this role to promote and safeguard the wellbeing and interests of his or her patients or clients by ensuring they are aware of their rights and have access to information to make informed decisions. Advocacy in health care is an integral part of professional practice. —**advocacy** [ad-vō-kă-sij] *n.*

 **SEE WEB LINKS**

- Explanation of an advocate's role in mental health care from the Department of Health

**Aedes** [ay-ee-deez] *n.* a genus of widely distributed mosquitoes occurring throughout the tropics and subtropics. **A. aegypti** the principal vector of dengue and yellow fever.

**aegophony** [e-gof-ōni] *n.* *see* VOCAL RESONANCE.

**-aemia** *combining form denoting a specified condition of the blood.*

**aer- (aero-)** *combining form denoting air or gas.*

**aerobe** [air-ohb] *n.* any organism, especially a microbe, that requires the presence of free oxygen for life and growth. *Compare* ANAEROBE. —**aerobic** [air-oh-bik] *adj.*

**aerobic exercise** *n.* *see* EXERCISE.

**aerobic respiration** *n.* a type of cellular respiration in which foodstuffs (carbohydrates) are completely oxidized by atmospheric oxygen, with the production of maximum chemical energy from the foodstuffs.

**aerogenous** [air-ōj-in-ūs] *adj.* producing gas. The term is applied to bacteria such as *Clostridium perfringens*, which causes gas gangrene.

**aerophagy** [air-off-āji] *n.* the swallowing of air. Voluntary aerophagy is used to permit oesophageal speech after surgical removal of the larynx (usually for cancer).

**aerosol** [air-ō-sol] *n.* a suspension of extremely small liquid or solid particles in the air. Drugs in aerosol form may be administered by inhalation.

**aetiology (etiology)** [ee-ti-ol-ōji] *n.* **1.** the study or science of the causes of disease. **2.** the cause of a specific disease.

**AF** *n.* *see* (ATRIAL) FIBRILLATION.

**AFB** *pl. n.* *see* ACID-FAST (BACILLI).

**afebrile** [ay-feb-ryl] *adj.* without, or not showing any signs of, a fever.

**affect** [af-ekt] *n.* (in psychiatry) **1.** the predominant emotion in a person's mental state at a particular moment. **2.** the emotion associated with a particular idea. **blunted a.** diminished intensity of emotional response, which is a feature of some forms of schizophrenia and depression. —**affective** [ă-fek-tiv] *adj.*

**affective disorder (mood disorder)** [dis-ord-der] *n.* any psychiatric disorder featuring abnormalities of mood or emotion (affect). The most serious of these are depression and mania. Other affective disorders include SAD (seasonal affective disorder).

**afferent** [af-er-ent] *adj.* **1.** designating nerves or neurones that convey impulses to the brain or spinal cord. **2.** designating blood vessels that feed a capillary network in an organ or part. **3.** designating lym-