

# CTR Nomenclature Survey Results: To Change or Not to Change

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## Majority Favors Name Change

Responses to a recent online survey about perceptions of the term “Certified Tumor Registrar” generally support updating this nomenclature. A follow-up survey will be conducted in early 2008 to further determine respondents’ preferences. Evaluating the relevance of the CTR nomenclature is one of the strategic objectives, under Credentialing, in NCRA’s current five-year Strategic Management Plan.

The survey, which ran from July 18 through August 3, 2007, was conducted by the Nomenclature Task Force of the Council on Certification. There was a 21% response rate from NCRA members (953 of 4,500 members) and a 20% response rate from CTRs (855 of 4,200). These percentage rates are considered a representative sample on which decisions can be based.

Analyses were conducted on the collected data and a summary of these results was presented to the Council and NCRA’s Board of Directors. This article presents these results.\*

## Need Term That’s More Representative, Professional

Overall, 65% of respondents thought a change would be positive. Only 8% said it would not be positive and 28% said maybe.

Respondents think an updated CTR nomenclature would be more representative (71%), professional (70%), and prestigious (59%) but will not necessarily have a financial impact (only 41% said it would). If the name is updated, 31% would expect no change.

Responses from only those having CTRs were similar to those of the aggregate.

Respondents did not feel the term “CTR” is easily understood (69% no, 22% yes) nor credible (48% no, 25% yes). They were undecided as to whether it is representative (43% no, 39% yes, 28% don’t know/no opinion).

Looking at pay comparisons, Registrars felt that only two of the listed categories have either the same or lower salaries: abstractor and technician. They rated co-workers with the titles of coordinator, analyst, manager, and professional as higher-salaried, with director as much higher.

The two terms on the survey that scored highest as representative/very representative of what Registrars do were “oncology” (95%) and “cancer” (91%). The term “professional” received the next-highest score (73%). Although the terms “data” and “information” may be similar, “data” was rated higher (68%) than “information” (58%). The other highly rated words were “coordinator,” “manager,” and “specialist” (all 68%) and “analyst” (58%). But less than half of respondents considered the terms “Registrar” (49%), “tumor” (46%) or “technician” (24%) as representative of what they do.

## Opinions Similar for All Experience

When responses were analyzed based on the years of Registry experience vs. whether the respondent was just planning to become a CTR, there was not a great difference in results. Those with more experience seemed to be slightly more positive about the current CTR name and less positive about a name change, but still in favor of it, than those with fewer years. Those not yet a CTR seemed to think a change would be most positive (72%).

Most respondents (77%) worked in a hospital setting and 10% in a central or state setting. The average length of employment as a Registrar was about 11 years, with 50% having less and 50% having more.

## Pro and Con Comments

Many respondents wrote text comments about updating the CTR name and offered possible alternatives. All individual text responses were reviewed by the task force.

The text comments, although not statistically significant, provide additional insights to the survey results. For example, to paraphrase

several comments that don’t support updating: “CTR’ may not be a great name, but it has been in use for a long time and has recognition value.”

- On the other hand, the four most frequent comments favored updating:
- The most common comment (20%) touched on how the term “Registrar” is perceived. Most thought it was perceived as a patient registration and/or clerical position and should not be part of the certification title.
- The second-most common comment (15%) stated that the current name does not reflect actual duties. These comments came from all levels of Registry operations but were consistent in stating that the name should be more indicative of what Registrars are expected to do and of the education level that will be required in the future.
- Requests to remove “tumor” from the certification title was the third-most frequent comment. Many talked about being the target for jokers who wanted to “register a tumor.” Others thought that some were turned off by the word “tumor” more so than the word “cancer.”
- Almost 11% of the comments indicated that a change is overdue or is necessary to keep current.

The fifth most-frequent comment (about 5%) reflected a belief that a name change would not change perceptions.

## Possible Name Choices

The Nomenclature Task Force is now identifying six possible names, including the current “Certified Tumor Registrar,” to be included in the follow-up survey. These names will be based on the responses and suggested names submitted to the current survey. **If this issue is important to you, be sure to watch for and participate in the next survey.**

- \* Percents do not always add up to 100%, either because of rounding or because of neutral answers (don’t know/no opinion) not being included in the text. ●