

The Role of Medical Terminology in XXI Century

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Abstract: The article introduces the complexity of medical terminology and its prevalence in everyday life, emphasizing that understanding it is crucial for navigating medical contexts. The main aim of the article is to demystify medical terminology, making it accessible and understandable to a broad audience. It asserts that with a grasp of its basic structure, even complex medical terms can become comprehensible. Medical terminology is defined as the specialized language used within the medical profession. It encompasses a wide range of terms related to the human body, including its anatomy, physiology, diseases, treatments, and procedures. The article explains the methodology of medical terminology, focusing on its morphological structure. It clarifies that medical terms are typically constructed from a combination of prefixes, root words, combining vowels, and suffixes, mostly derived from Latin.

Keywords: Medical terminology, specialized language, understanding, framework, medical profession, Western medicine, vocabulary, Morphology, Prefixes, Root words, combining vowels, suffixes, Gastroenteritis.

Introduction: Medical terminology is encountered by everyone at some point, whether at the doctor's office or while reading medical documents. Often, this language seems daunting, akin to a foreign tongue. However, like any specialized jargon, medical terminology follows a systematic structure. Once one grasps this framework, even the most complex terms become understandable. This article aims to elucidate medical terminology, providing a solid introduction for both medical students and laypersons.

Method and methodology: Medical terminology comprises the vocabulary of Western medicine, encompassing descriptions of the human body, its functions, diseases, treatments, and procedures. Essentially, it serves as a common language for medical professionals to efficiently communicate. In linguistic terms, morphology refers to word formation and relationships. In medical language, words are constructed by combining various base elements, typically derived from Latin, to accurately depict bodily conditions. These elements include prefixes, root words, combining vowels, and suffixes, each contributing to the meaning of the term. For instance, "gastroenteritis" can be deconstructed into "gastro" (prefix), "enter" (root), and "itis" (suffix). This breakdown facilitates understanding by modifying the meaning of the word.

Gastro – stomach

Enter – intestines

Itis – Inflammation

Result: This deconstruction reveals that Gastroenteritis denotes inflammation affecting both the stomach and small intestine. Moreover, medical professionals frequently employ abbreviations for swift communication. Perhaps you've observed your doctor jotting down cryptic notes post-consultation, leaving you perplexed. Abbreviations and acronyms serve as

convenient shorthand, facilitating communication of medication instructions, test results, or medical conditions swiftly. While medical terminology is expansive, we've compiled a selection of prevalent prefixes, suffixes, root words, and abbreviations to aid in deciphering numerous medical terms effectively.

Prefixes

a(n) absence of
ante before
anti against
aut(o) self
bi, bis double, twice, two
brachy short
brady slow
circum around, about
contra against, counter
dorsi back
dys bad, faulty, abnormal
end(o) inside
epi outer, superficial, upon
eu normal
extra outside

Suffixes

algesia sensitivity to pain
algia pain
derma skin
ectomy excision (removal by cutting)
emia blood
gen become, originate
gram, graph write, record
itis inflammation
lys(is) dissolve
malacia soft
oma tumor
opia vision
opsy examination
osis condition
ostosis condition of bone

Abbreviations

These are just a few of the commonly used **medical abbreviations** you might come across.

a.c.: Before meals.

a/g ratio: Albumin to globulin ratio.

ACL: Anterior cruciate ligament. Ad lib: At liberty.

AFR: Acute renal failure

ADHD: Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

b.i.d.: Twice daily.

bld: Blood.

Bandemia: Slang for elevated level of band forms of white blood cells.

Bibasilar: At the bases of both lungs.

BKA: Below the knee amputation.

BP: Blood pressure.

C&S: Culture and sensitivity, performed to detect infection.

C/O: Complaint of. The patient's expressed concern.

cap: Capsule.

Discussion: It's evident from its sound that medical terminology has its roots deeply embedded in ancient Latin and Greek. According to the National Institutes of Health, some of the oldest documented medical writings date back to the 5th century BC, authored by the ancient Greek physician Hippocrates, renowned as the 'father of medicine'. Another notable figure whose writings continue to influence medical discourse is the Greek doctor Galen. When Rome conquered Greece, a fusion of cultures and languages occurred, giving rise to new medical terminology to describe concepts and treatments. These early medical texts were handwritten and passed down through generations. During the Renaissance period, Latin became prominent in describing anatomical terms. In addition to Greek and Latin, various other languages, such as Arabic, Chinese, Gaelic, Dutch, Italian, German, French, and Spanish, have also contributed to the evolution of medical terminology over time.

Conclusion: At first glance, medical terminology may appear daunting, but with some patience, one can swiftly grasp its mechanics and decipher even the most intricate words. This knowledge proves invaluable for comprehending common ailments encountered throughout life or when engaging with medical literature. The medical language inherited from ancient civilizations remains prevalent today, with prefixes, root words, and suffixes predominantly originating from ancient Greek and Latin. A plethora of online and offline resources exists to aid in understanding medical terminology, ranging from beginner-friendly guides for home use to authoritative books and dictionaries tailored for practitioners and healthcare professionals. Among the options provided, individuals can easily find resources tailored to their specific needs.

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