MedDRA® TERM SELECTION: POINTS TO CONSIDER

ICH-Endorsed Guide for MedDRA Users

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SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

The **Med**ical **D**ictionary for **R**egulatory **A**ctivities terminology (MedDRA) was designed for sharing regulatory information for human medical products. In order for MedDRA to harmonise the exchange of coded data, users should be consistent in the assignment of terms to verbatim reports of symptoms, signs, diseases, etc.

This *MedDRA Term Selection: Points to Consider* (MTS:PTC) document is an ICH-endorsed guide for MedDRA users. It is updated annually in step with the March release of MedDRA (starting with MedDRA Version 23.0) and is support documentation for MedDRA. It was developed and is maintained by a working group charged by the ICH Management Committee. The working group consists of representatives of ICH regulatory and industry members, the World Health Organization, the MedDRA Maintenance and Support Services Organization (MSSO), and the Japanese Maintenance Organization (JMO) (see the M1 MedDRA Terminology page under Multidisciplinary Guidelines on the ICH website for a list of current members).

In addition, the working group has developed a condensed version of the MTS:PTC document which focuses on the fundamental principles of term selection and is intended to support the implementation and use of MedDRA in the ICH regions and beyond (see Appendix, Section 4.2). It is available in all MedDRA languages except for English, Japanese, and other languages with an available translation of the full MTS:PTC document. The full MTS:PTC document in its various translations will continue to be maintained and updated as the complete reference document.

1.1 Objectives of this Document

The objective of the MTS:PTC document is to promote **accurate** and **consistent** term selection.

Organisations are encouraged to document their term selection methods and quality assurance procedures in organisation-specific coding guidelines which should be consistent with the MTS:PTC.

Consistent term selection promotes medical accuracy for sharing MedDRA-coded data and facilitates a common understanding of shared data among academic, commercial and regulatory entities. The MTS:PTC could also be used by healthcare professionals, researchers, and other parties outside of the regulated biopharmaceutical industry.

The document provides term selection considerations for business purposes and regulatory requirements. There may be examples that do not reflect practices and requirements in all regions. This document does not specify regulatory reporting requirements. It also does not address database issues or assignment to specific database fields. As experience with MedDRA increases, and as MedDRA changes, there will be revisions to this document.

1.2 Uses of MedDRA

Term selection for adverse reactions/adverse events (ARs/AEs), device-related events, product quality issues, medication errors, exposures, medical history, social history, investigations, misuse and abuse, off label use, and indications is addressed in this MTS:PTC document.

MedDRA's structure allows for aggregation of those reported terms in medically meaningful groupings to facilitate analysis of safety data. MedDRA can also be used to list AR/AE data in reports (tables, line listings, etc.), compute frequencies of similar ARs/AEs, and capture and analyse related data such as product indications, investigations, and medical and social history.

1.3 How to Use this Document

The MTS:PTC document does not address every potential term selection situation. Medical judgment and common sense should also be applied.

This document is not a substitute for MedDRA training. It is essential for users to have knowledge of MedDRA's structure and content. For optimal MedDRA term selection, one should also refer to the MedDRA Introductory Guide (see Appendix, Section 4.2).

Users are invited to contact the MSSO Help Desk with any questions or comments about this MTS:PTC document.

1.4 Preferred Option

In some cases, where there is more than one option for selecting terms, a “preferred option” is identified in this document. **Designation of a “preferred option” does not limit MedDRA users to applying that option.** Users should always first consider regional regulatory requirements. An organisation should be consistent in the option that they choose to use and document that option in internal coding guidelines.

1.5 MedDRA Browsing Tools

The MSSO provides browsers (the Desktop, Web-Based, and Mobile browsers) that allow for searching and viewing the terminology (see Appendix, Section 4.2). Users may find these browsers useful aids in term selection.

SECTION 2 – GENERAL TERM SELECTION PRINCIPLES

2.1 Quality of Source Data

The quality of the original reported information directly impacts the quality of data output. Clarification should be obtained for data that are ambiguous, confusing, or unintelligible. If clarification cannot be obtained, refer to Section 3.4.

2.2 Quality Assurance

To promote consistency, organisations should document their term selection methods and quality assurance procedures in coding guidelines consistent with this MTS:PTC document.

Clear initial data can be promoted through careful design of data collection forms, and training of individuals in data collection and follow-up (e.g., investigators, drug sales representatives).

To ensure that the selected MedDRA term accurately reflects the given scenario, all information that is relevant (including contextual) for term selection needs to be available (e.g., in the verbatim text) to coders, autoencoding systems and reviewers.

This is true in all cases and may be of particular relevance for age or gender information as well as medication error, overdose, abuse, misuse, lack of effect, off label use or product defects scenarios.

Term selection should be reviewed by a qualified individual, i.e., a person with medical background or training who has also received MedDRA training.

Human oversight of term selection performed by IT tools (such as an autoencoder) is needed to assure that the end result fully reflects the reported information and makes medical sense.

For further information, please refer to Section 2 of the MedDRA Points to Consider Companion Document which contains detailed examples and guidance on data quality (see Appendix, Section 4.2).

2.3 Do Not Alter MedDRA

MedDRA is a standardised terminology with a pre-defined term hierarchy that should not be altered. Users must not make ad hoc structural alterations to

MedDRA, including changing the primary SOC allocation; doing so would compromise the integrity of this standard. If terms are found to be incorrectly placed in the MedDRA hierarchy, a change request should be submitted to the MSSO.

Example

Change Request to Re-Assign Primary SOC
In a previous version of MedDRA, PT *Factor VIII deficiency* was incorrectly assigned to primary SOC *Blood and lymphatic system disorders*. By means of a Change Request, the PT was re-assigned to primary SOC *Congenital, familial and genetic disorders* (making SOC *Blood and lymphatic system disorders* its secondary SOC assignment).

2.4 Always Select a Lowest Level Term

MedDRA Lowest Level Term(s) (LLT) that most accurately reflects the reported verbatim information should be selected.

The degree of specificity of some MedDRA LLTs may be challenging for term selection. Here are some tips for specific instances:

- *A single letter difference in a reported verbatim text can impact the meaning of the word and consequently the term selection*

Example

Reported	**LLT Selected**
Lip sore	*Lip sore* (PT *Lip pain*)
Lip sore**s**	*Sores lip* (PT *Cheilitis*)
Sore gums	*Sore gums* (PT *Gingival pain*)
Sore**s** gum	*Sores gum* (PT *Noninfective gingivitis*)

- *Gender-specific terms*

MedDRA generally excludes terms with demographic descriptors (age, gender, etc.), but some terms with gender qualifiers are included if the gender renders the concept unique.

Example

Distinct Gender-Specific Terms
In MedDRA, there are separate LLTs/PTs for *Infertility*, *Infertility female* and *Infertility male*

Organisation-specific coding guidelines should address instances when it is important to capture gender-specific concepts.

MedDRA users should also consider the impact of gender-specific terms when comparing current data to data coded with a legacy terminology in which such gender specificity may not have been available.

Example

Gender Specificity – Legacy Terms vs. MedDRA
Consider the impact of selecting gender-specific MedDRA terms for breast cancer (e.g., LLT *Breast cancer female*) when comparing data coded in a legacy terminology with only a single “Breast cancer” term.

- *Postoperative and post procedural terms*

MedDRA contains some “postoperative” and “post procedural” terms. Select the most specific term available.

Example

Reported	**LLT Selected**
Bleeding after surgery	*Bleeding postoperative*

Reported	LLT Selected
Sepsis occurred after the procedure	*Post procedural sepsis*

- *Newly added terms*

More specific LLTs may be available in a new version of MedDRA. See Appendix, Section 4.2.

2.5 Select Only Current Lowest Level Terms

Non-current LLTs should not be used for term selection.

2.6 When to Request a Term

Do not address deficiencies in MedDRA with organisation-specific solutions. If there is no MedDRA term available to adequately reflect the reported information, submit a change request to MSSO.

Example

Change Request for a New Term
LLT *HBV coinfection* was added to MedDRA following a user's request.

2.7 Use of Medical Judgment in Term Selection

If an exact match cannot be found, **medical judgment** should be used to adequately represent the medical concept with an existing MedDRA term.

2.8 Selecting More than One Term

When a specific medical concept is not represented by a **single** MedDRA term, consider requesting a new term through the change request process (see Section 2.6). Whilst waiting for the new term, select one or more existing terms using a consistent approach with careful consideration of the impact on data retrieval, analysis, and reporting.

In some cases, it may be appropriate to select more than one MedDRA LLT to represent the reported information. If only one term is selected, specificity may be lost; on the other hand, selecting more than one term may lead to redundant counts. Established procedures should be documented.

Example

More Than One LLT Selected
There is no single MedDRA term for “metastatic gingival cancer”. Therefore, the options are: 1. Select LLT *Gingival cancer* OR LLT *Metastatic carcinoma* 2. Select LLT *Gingival cancer* AND LLT *Metastatic carcinoma*

2.9 Check the Hierarchy

When considering selecting an LLT, check the hierarchy above the LLT (PT level and further up the hierarchy to HLT, HLGT and SOC) to ensure the placement accurately reflects the meaning of the reported term.

2.10 Select Terms for All Reported Information, Do Not Add Information

Select terms for every AR/AE reported, regardless of causal association. In addition, select terms for device-related events, product quality issues, medication errors, medical history, social history, investigations, and indications as appropriate.

If a diagnosis is reported with characteristic signs and symptoms, the **preferred option** is to select a term for the diagnosis only (see Section 3.1 for details and examples).

When selecting terms, no reported information should be excluded from the term selection process; similarly, do not add information by selecting a term for a diagnosis if only signs or symptoms are reported.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Abdominal pain, increased serum amylase, and increased serum lipase	*Abdominal pain*	It is inappropriate to assign an LLT for diagnosis of “pancreatitis”
	Serum amylase increased	
	Lipase increased	

SECTION 3 – TERM SELECTION POINTS

3.1 Definitive and Provisional Diagnoses with or without Signs and Symptoms

The table below provides term selection options for definitive and provisional diagnoses with or without signs/symptoms reported. Examples are listed below the table.

A provisional diagnosis may be described as “suspicion of”, “probable”, “presumed”, likely”, “rule out”, “questionable”, “differential”, etc.

The **preferred option** for a single or multiple provisional diagnosis(es) is to select a term(s) for the diagnosis(es) and terms for reported signs and symptoms. This is because a provisional diagnosis may change while signs/symptoms do not.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">SUMMARY OF PREFERRED AND ALTERNATE OPTIONS</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">SINGLE DIAGNOSIS</th></tr>
<tr><th>DEFINITIVE DIAGNOSIS</th><th>PROVISIONAL DIAGNOSIS</th></tr>
<tr><td>Single definitive diagnosis without signs/symptoms
Diagnosis (only possible option)</td><td>Single provisional diagnosis without signs/symptoms
Provisional diagnosis (only possible option)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Single definitive diagnosis with signs/symptoms
Preferred: Diagnosis only
Alternate: Diagnosis and signs/symptoms
Note: Always include signs/symptoms not associated with diagnosis
SEE EXAMPLE 1</td><td>Single provisional diagnosis with signs/symptoms
Preferred: Provisional diagnosis and signs/symptoms
Alternate: Signs/symptoms only
Note: Always include signs/symptoms not associated with diagnosis
SEE EXAMPLE 2</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">MULTIPLE DIAGNOSES</th></tr>
<tr><th>DEFINITIVE DIAGNOSES</th><th>PROVISIONAL DIAGNOSES</th></tr>
<tr><td>Multiple definitive diagnoses without signs/symptoms
Multiple diagnoses (only possible option)</td><td>Multiple provisional diagnoses without signs/symptoms
Multiple provisional diagnoses (only possible option)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Multiple definitive diagnoses with signs/symptoms
Preferred: Multiple diagnoses only
Alternate: Diagnoses and signs/symptoms
Note: Always include signs/symptoms not associated with diagnosis
SEE EXAMPLE 3</td><td>Multiple provisional diagnoses with signs/symptoms
Preferred: Multiple provisional diagnoses and signs/symptoms
Alternate: Signs/symptoms only
Note: Always include signs/symptoms not associated with diagnosis
SEE EXAMPLE 4</td></tr>
</table>

EXAMPLES			
Example	**Reported**	**LLT Selected**	**Preferred Option**
1	Anaphylactic reaction, rash dyspnoea, hypotension, and laryngospasm	*Anaphylactic reaction*	✓
		Anaphylactic reaction *Rash* *Dyspnoea* *Hypotension* *Laryngospasm*	
2	Possible myocardial infarction with chest pain, dyspnoea, diaphoresis	*Myocardial infarction* *Chest pain* *Dyspnoea* *Diaphoresis*	✓
		Chest pain *Dyspnoea* *Diaphoresis*	
3	Pulmonary embolism, myocardial infarction, and congestive heart failure with chest pain, cyanosis, shortness of breath, and blood pressure decreased	*Pulmonary embolism* *Myocardial infarction* *Congestive heart failure*	✓
		Pulmonary embolism *Myocardial infarction* *Congestive heart failure* *Chest pain* *Cyanosis* *Shortness of breath* *Blood pressure decreased*	

EXAMPLES			
Example	**Reported**	**LLT Selected**	**Preferred Option**
4	Chest pain, cyanosis, shortness of breath, and blood pressure decreased. Differential diagnosis includes pulmonary embolism, myocardial infarction, and congestive heart failure.	*Pulmonary embolism* *Myocardial infarction* *Congestive heart failure* *Chest pain* *Cyanosis* *Shortness of breath* *Blood pressure decreased*	✓
		Chest pain *Cyanosis* *Shortness of breath* *Blood pressure decreased*	
Always include signs/ symptoms not associated with diagnosis	Myocardial infarction, chest pain, dyspnoea, diaphoresis, ECG changes and jaundice	*Myocardial infarction* *Jaundice* (note that jaundice is not typically associated with myocardial infarction)	

3.2 Death and Other Patient Outcomes

Death, disability, and hospitalisation are considered outcomes or seriousness criteria in the context of safety reporting and not usually considered ARs/AEs. Outcomes and seriousness criteria are typically recorded in a separate manner (data field) from AR/AE information. A term for the outcome or seriousness criterion should be selected if it is the only information reported or provides significant clinical information.

(For reports of suicide and self-harm, see Section 3.3).

3.2.1 Death with ARs/AEs

Death is an outcome and seriousness criterion and is not usually considered an AR/AE. If ARs/AEs are reported along with death, select terms for the ARs/AEs. Record the fatal outcome in an appropriate data field.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Death due to myocardial infarction	*Myocardial infarction*	Record death as an outcome and seriousness criterion
Constipation, ruptured bowel, peritonitis, sepsis; patient died	*Constipation* *Perforated bowel* *Peritonitis* *Sepsis*	

3.2.2 Death as the only reported information

If the only information reported is death, select the most specific death term available. Circumstances of death should not be inferred but recorded only if stated by the reporter.

Death terms in MedDRA are linked to HLGT Fatal outcomes.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Patient was found dead.	*Found dead*
Patient died in childbirth.	*Maternal death during childbirth*
The autopsy report stated that the cause of death was natural.	*Death from natural causes*

3.2.3 Death terms that add important clinical information

Death terms that add important clinical information should be selected along with any reported ARs/AEs.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Patient experienced a rash and had sudden cardiac death.	*Rash* *Sudden cardiac death*

3.2.4 Other patient outcomes (non-fatal)

Hospitalisation, disability, and other patient outcomes are not generally considered ARs/AEs.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Hospitalisation due to congestive heart failure	*Congestive heart failure*	Record hospitalisation as a seriousness criterion

If the only information reported is the patient outcome or seriousness criterion, select the most specific term available.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Patient was hospitalised	*Hospitalisation*

3.3 Suicide and Self-Harm

Accurate and consistent term selection for reports of suicide attempts, completed suicides, and self-harm is necessary for data retrieval and analysis. If the motive for reported injury is not clear, seek clarification from the source.

3.3.1 If overdose is reported

Do not assume that an overdose – including an intentional overdose – is a suicide attempt. Select only the appropriate overdose term (see Section 3.18).

3.3.2 If self-injury is reported

For reports of self-injury that do not mention suicide or suicide attempt, select only the appropriate self-injury term.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Self slashing	*Self inflicted laceration*	LLT *Self inflicted laceration* is linked to PT *Intentional self-injury*
Cut her own wrists		
Cut wrists in a suicide attempt	*Self inflicted laceration* *Suicide attempt*	
Took an overdose in an attempt to commit suicide	*Intentional overdose* *Suicide attempt*	If overdose is reported in the context of suicide or a suicide attempt, the more specific LLT *Intentional overdose* can be selected (see also Section 3.18)

3.3.3 Fatal suicide attempt

If a suicide attempt is fatal, select the term that reflects the outcome instead of the attempt only.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Suicide attempt resulted in death	*Completed suicide*	Record death as an outcome and seriousness criterion.

3.4 Conflicting/Ambiguous/Vague Information

When conflicting, ambiguous, or vague information is reported, term selection to support appropriate data retrieval may be difficult. When this occurs, attempt to obtain more specific information. If clarification cannot be achieved, select terms as illustrated in the examples below (Sections 3.4.1 through 3.4.3).

3.4.1 Conflicting information

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Hyperkalaemia with a serum potassium of 1.6 mEq/L	*Serum potassium abnormal*	LLT *Serum potassium abnormal* covers both of the reported concepts (note: serum potassium of 1.6 mEq/L is a **low** result, not high)

3.4.2 Ambiguous information

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
GU pain	*Pain*	Effort should be made to obtain clarification of the meaning of "GU" from the source so that more specific term selection may be possible. “GU” could be either “genito-urinary” or “gastric ulcer”. If additional information is not available, then select a term to reflect the information that is known, i.e., LLT *Pain*

3.4.3 Vague information

For information that is vague, attempt to obtain clarification. If clarification cannot be achieved, select an LLT that reflects the vague nature of the reported event.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Turned green	*Unevaluable event*	“Turned green” reported alone is vague; this could refer to a patient condition or even to a product (e.g., pills)

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Patient had a medical problem of unclear type	*Ill-defined disorder*	Since it is known that there is some form of a medical disorder, LLT *Ill-defined disorder* can be selected

3.5 Combination Terms

A **combination term** in MedDRA is a single medical concept combined with additional medical wording that provides important information on pathophysiology or aetiology. A combination term is an internationally recognised, distinct and robust medical concept as illustrated in the examples below.

Example

MedDRA Combination Terms
PT *Diabetic retinopathy*
PT *Hypertensive cardiomegaly*
PT *Eosinophilic pneumonia*

A combination term may be selected for certain reported ARs/AEs (e.g., a condition “due to” another condition), keeping the following points in mind (Note: medical judgment should be applied):

3.5.1 Diagnosis and sign/symptom

If a diagnosis and its characteristic signs or symptoms are reported, select a term for the diagnosis (see Section 3.1). A MedDRA combination term is not needed in this instance.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Chest pain due to myocardial infarction	*Myocardial infarction*

3.5.2 One reported condition is more specific than the other

If two conditions are reported in combination, and one is more specific than the other, select a term for the more specific condition.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Hepatic function disorder (acute hepatitis)	*Hepatitis acute*
Arrhythmia due to atrial fibrillation	*Atrial fibrillation*

3.5.3 A MedDRA combination term is available

If two conditions or concepts are reported in combination, and a single MedDRA combination term is available to represent them, select that term.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Retinopathy due to diabetes	*Diabetic retinopathy*
Rash with itching	*Itchy rash*
Breast cancer (HER2 positive)	*HER2 positive breast cancer*

3.5.4 When to “split” into more than one MedDRA term

If “splitting” the reported ARs/AEs provides more clinical information, select more than one MedDRA term. For example, in the field of oncology, there may be situations in which it is important to capture information not only for the tumour type, but also for the associated genetic marker or abnormality because of the implications for aetiology, prognosis or treatment. If a combination term that describes a genetic marker or abnormality associated with a medical condition is not available, separate terms may be selected to represent the genetic marker or abnormality as well as the associated medical condition.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Diarrhoea and vomiting	*Diarrhoea* *Vomiting*
Wrist fracture due to fall	*Wrist fracture* *Fall*
BRAF positive malignant melanoma	*BRAF gene mutation* *Malignant melanoma*

Exercise medical judgment so that information is not lost when “splitting” a reported term. Always check the MedDRA hierarchy above the selected term to be sure it is appropriate for the reported information.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Haematoma due to an animal bite	*Animal bite* *Traumatic haematoma*	LLT *Traumatic haematoma* is more appropriate than LLT *Haematoma* (LLT *Traumatic haematoma* links to HLT *Non-site specific injuries NEC* and HLT *Haemorrhages NEC* while LLT *Haematoma* links only to HLT *Haemorrhages NEC*)

3.5.5 Event reported with pre-existing condition

If an event is reported along with a pre-existing condition that has not changed, and if there is not an appropriate combination term in MedDRA, select a term for the event only (see Section 3.9 for pre-existing conditions that have changed).

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Shortness of breath due to pre-existing cancer	*Shortness of breath*	In this instance, “shortness of breath” is the event; “cancer” is the pre-existing condition that has not changed

3.6 Age vs. Event Specificity

3.6.1 MedDRA term includes age and event information

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Jaundice in a newborn	*Jaundice of newborn*
Developed psychosis at age 6 years	*Childhood psychosis*

3.6.2 No available MedDRA term includes both age and event information

The preferred option is to select a term for the event and record the age in the appropriate demographic field.

Alternatively, select terms (more than one) that together reflect both the age of the patient and the event.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Preferred Option
Pancreatitis in a newborn	*Pancreatitis*	✓
	Pancreatitis *Neonatal disorder*	

3.7 Body Site vs. Event Specificity

3.7.1 MedDRA term includes body site and event information

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Skin rash on face	*Rash on face*

3.7.2 No available MedDRA term includes both body site and event information

Select a term for the **event**, rather than a term that reflects a non-specific condition at the body site; in other words, the event information generally has priority.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Skin rash on chest	*Skin rash*	In this instance, there is no available term for a skin rash on the chest

However, medical judgment is required, and sometimes, the body site information should have priority as in the example below.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Cyanosis at injection site	*Injection site discolouration*	Cyanosis may suggest a generalised disorder. In this example, selecting LLT *Cyanosis* would result in loss of important medical information and miscommunication.

3.7.3 Event occurring at multiple body sites

If an event is reported to occur at more than one body site, and if all of those LLTs link to the same PT, then select a single LLT that most accurately reflects the event; in other words, the **event** information has priority.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Skin rash on face and neck	*Skin rash*	LLT *Rash on face*, LLT *Neck rash*, and LLT *Skin rash* all link to PT *Rash*
Oedema of hands and feet	*Oedema of extremities*	LLT *Oedema hands* and LLT *Oedematous feet* both link to PT *Oedema peripheral*. However, LLT *Oedema of extremities* most accurately reflects the event in a single term

3.8 Location-Specific vs. Microorganism-Specific Infection

3.8.1 MedDRA term includes microorganism and anatomic location

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Pneumococcal pneumonia	*Pneumococcal pneumonia*	In this example, the implied anatomic location is the lung

3.8.2 No available MedDRA term includes both microorganism and anatomic location

The **preferred** option is to select terms for both the microorganism-specific infection **and** the anatomic location.

Alternatively, select a term that reflects the anatomic location or select a term that reflects the microorganism-specific infection. Medical judgment should be used in deciding whether anatomic location or the microorganism-specific infection should take priority.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Preferred Option	Comment
Klebsiella kidney infection	*Klebsiella infection* *Kidney infection*	✓	Represents both microorganism-specific infection and anatomic location
	Kidney infection		Represents location-specific infection
	Klebsiella infection		Represents microorganism-specific infection

3.9 Modification of Pre-existing Conditions

Pre-existing conditions that have changed may be considered ARs/AEs, especially if the condition has worsened or progressed (see Section 3.5.5 for pre-existing conditions that have not changed, and Section 3.22 for an unexpected improvement of a pre-existing condition).

Ways That Pre-existing Conditions May Be Modified
Aggravated, exacerbated, worsened
Recurrent
Progressive

Select a term that most accurately reflects the modified condition (if such term exists)

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Exacerbation of myasthenia gravis	*Myasthenia gravis aggravated*

If no such term exists, consider these approaches:

- Example 1: Select a term for the pre-existing condition and record the modification in a consistent, documented way in appropriate data fields
- Example 2: Select a term for the pre-existing condition **and** a second term for the modification of the condition (e.g., LLT *Condition aggravated*, LLT *Disease progression*). Record the modification in a consistent, documented way in appropriate data fields.

Example

Examples	Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Example 1	Jaundice aggravated	*Jaundice*	Record “aggravated” in a consistent, documented way.
Example 2	Jaundice aggravated	*Jaundice* *Condition aggravated*	Record “aggravated” in a consistent, documented way. Select terms for the pre-existing condition and the modification.

3.10 Exposures during Pregnancy and Breast Feeding

To select the most appropriate exposure term (or terms) from HLT *Exposures associated with pregnancy, delivery and lactation*, first determine if the subject/patient who was exposed is the mother, the child/foetus, or the father. If the reported verbatim information does not specify who was exposed, then a general term such as LLT *Exposure during pregnancy* can be selected.

In addition, MedDRA includes terms indicating a pregnant or breastfeeding woman was exposed, which are placed in HLTs other than HLT *Exposures associated with pregnancy, delivery and lactation*. These terms include e.g., PT *Maternal immunisation*, PT *Maternal therapy to enhance foetal lung maturity* and PT *Maternal-foetal therapy*, as well as several PTs relating to pregnancy on contraceptive. Selecting pregnancy/breast-feeding exposure terms may be considered in addition, depending on the specific circumstances of each case.

3.10.1 Events in the mother

3.10.1.1 Pregnant patient exposed to medication with clinical consequences

If a pregnancy exposure is reported with clinical consequences, select terms for both the pregnancy exposure and the clinical consequences.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Pregnant patient receiving drug X experienced a pruritic rash	*Maternal exposure during pregnancy* *Pruritic rash*

3.10.1.2 Pregnant patient exposed to medication without clinical consequences

If a pregnancy exposure report specifically states that there were no clinical consequences, the **preferred option** is to select only a term for the pregnancy exposure. Alternatively, a term for the pregnancy exposure and the additional LLT *No adverse effect* can be selected (see Section 3.21).

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Preferred Option
Patient received drug X while pregnant (no adverse effect)	*Maternal exposure during pregnancy*	✓
	Maternal exposure during pregnancy *No adverse effect*	

3.10.2 Events in the child or foetus

Select terms for both the type of exposure and any adverse event(s).

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Pregnant woman taking drug X; foetal tachycardia noted on routine examination	*Maternal exposure during pregnancy* *Foetal tachycardia*
Baby born with cleft palate; father had been taking drug X before conception	*Paternal drug exposure before pregnancy* *Cleft palate*
Nursing newborn exposed to drug X through breast milk; experienced vomiting	*Drug exposure via breast milk* *Vomiting neonatal*

3.11 Congenital Terms

"Congenital" = any condition present at birth, whether genetically inherited or occurring in utero (see the MedDRA Introductory Guide).

3.11.1 Congenital conditions

Select terms from SOC Congenital, familial and genetic disorders when the reporter describes the condition as congenital or when medical judgment establishes that the condition was present at the time of birth.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Congenital heart disease	*Heart disease congenital*	
Child born with heart disease		

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Newborn with phimosis	*Phimosis*	A “congenital” term is not available but LLT/PT *Phimosis* links to primary SOC *Congenital, familial and genetic disorders*

3.11.2 Acquired conditions (not present at birth)

If information is available indicating that the condition is not congenital or present at birth, i.e., it is acquired, select the non-qualified term for the condition, making sure that the non-qualified term does not link to SOC *Congenital, familial and genetic disorders*. If a non-qualified term is not available, select the “acquired” term for the condition.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Developed night blindness in middle age	*Night blindness*	LLT/PT *Night blindness* links to primary SOC *Eye disorders*. Do not assume the condition is congenital (LLT/PT *Congenital night blindness*).
Developed phimosis at age 45	*Acquired phimosis*	LLT/PT *Phimosis* should not be selected because it links to primary SOC *Congenital, familial and genetic disorders*

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
34 year old patient diagnosed with an oesophageal web	*Acquired oesophageal web*	A non-qualified term “Oesophageal web” is not available. It cannot be assumed that the condition was present at birth so it is appropriate to select the acquired term.

3.11.3 Conditions not specified as either congenital or acquired

If a condition is reported without any information describing it as congenital or acquired, select the non-qualified term for the condition. For conditions or diseases existing in both congenital and acquired forms, the following convention is applied in MedDRA: the more common form of the condition/disease is represented at the PT level without adding a qualifier of either “congenital” or “acquired”.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Pyloric stenosis	*Pyloric stenosis*	Pyloric stenosis is more commonly congenital than acquired; LLT/PT *Pyloric stenosis* links to primary SOC *Congenital, familial and genetic disorders*

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Hypothyroidism	*Hypothyroidism*	Hypothyroidism is more commonly acquired than congenital; LLT/PT *Hypothyroidism* links to primary SOC *Endocrine disorders*

3.12 Neoplasms

Due to the large number of neoplasm types, specific guidance cannot be provided for all situations. The MedDRA Introductory Guide describes the use and placement of neoplasm terms and related terms in MedDRA.

Keep in mind the following points:

Neoplasms Terms in MedDRA
"Cancer" and "carcinoma" are synonyms (see online MedDRA Concept Descriptions which can be accessed via the Web-Based Browser and MedDRA Desktop Browser)
"Tumo(u)r" terms refer to neoplasia
"Lump" and "mass" terms are not neoplasia

If the type of neoplasia is not clear, seek clarification from the reporter. Consult medical experts when selecting terms for difficult or unusual neoplasms.

3.12.1 Do not infer malignancy

Select a malignancy term only if malignancy is stated by the reporter. Reports of "tumo(u)r" events should not be assigned a "cancer", "carcinoma" or another malignant term unless it is clear that malignancy is present.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Tumour growing on skin	*Skin tumour*
Cancer growing on tongue	*Malignant tongue cancer*

3.13 Medical and Surgical Procedures

Terms in SOC Surgical and medical procedures are generally not appropriate for ARs/AEs. Terms in this SOC are not multiaxial. Be aware of the impact of these terms on data retrieval, analysis, and reporting.

Keep in mind the following points:

3.13.1 Only the procedure is reported

If only a procedure is reported, select a term for the procedure.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Patient had transfusion of platelets	*Platelet transfusion*
Patient had tonsillectomy in childhood	*Tonsillectomy*

3.13.2 Procedure and diagnosis are reported

If a procedure is reported with a diagnosis, the preferred option is to select terms for both the procedure and diagnosis. Alternatively, select a term only for the diagnosis.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Preferred Option	Comment
Liver transplantation due to liver injury	*Liver transplantation* *Liver injury*	✓	Selecting term for the procedure may indicate severity of the condition
	Liver injury		

3.14 Investigations

SOC Investigations includes test names with qualifiers (e.g., increased, decreased, abnormal, normal) and without qualifiers. Corresponding medical conditions (such as “hyper-” and “hypo-” terms) are in other “disorder” SOCs (e.g., SOC Metabolism and nutrition disorders).

SOC Investigations is not multiaxial; always consider the terms in this SOC for data retrieval.

3.14.1 Results of investigations as ARs/AEs

Keep in mind the following points when selecting terms for results of investigations:

- Selecting terms for a medical condition vs. an investigation result

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Hypoglycaemia	*Hypoglycaemia*	LLT *Hypoglycaemia* links to SOC *Metabolism and nutrition disorders*
Decreased glucose	*Glucose decreased*	LLT *Glucose decreased* links to SOC *Investigations*

- Unambiguous investigation result

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Glucose 40 mg/dL	*Glucose low*	Glucose is clearly below the reference range

- Ambiguous investigation result

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
His glucose was 40	*Glucose abnormal*	In this example, no units have been reported. Select LLT *Glucose abnormal* if clarification cannot be obtained

3.14.2 Investigation results consistent with diagnosis

When investigation results are reported with a diagnosis, select only a term for the diagnosis if investigation results are consistent with the diagnosis.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Elevated potassium, K 7.0 mmol/L, and hyperkalaemia	*Hyperkalaemia*	It is not necessary to select LLT *Potassium increased*

3.14.3 Investigation results not consistent with diagnosis

When investigation results are reported with a diagnosis, select a term for the diagnosis and also select terms for any investigation results that are not consistent with the diagnosis.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Alopecia, rash, and elevated potassium 7.0 mmol/L	*Alopecia* *Rash* *Potassium increased*	Elevated potassium is not consistent with the diagnoses of alopecia and rash. Terms for all concepts should be selected.

3.14.4 Grouped investigation result terms

Select a term for each investigation result as reported; do not “lump” together separate investigation results under an inclusive term **unless reported as such**.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Abnormalities of liver function tests	*Abnormal liver function tests*	
Increased alkaline phosphatase, increased SGPT, increased SGOT and elevated LDH	*Alkaline phosphatase increased* *SGPT increased* *SGOT increased* *LDH increased*	Select four individual terms for the investigation results. A single term such as LLT *Liver function tests abnormal* should **not** be selected

3.14.5 Investigation terms without qualifiers

Terms in SOC Investigations without qualifiers are intended to be used to record test names when entering diagnostic test data in the ICH E2B electronic transmission standard.

Example

Information/Reported (Verbatim)	LLT Selected for Test Name	Comment
Cardiac output measured	*Cardiac output*	
Haemoglobin 7.5 g/dL	*Haemoglobin*	LLT *Haemoglobin decreased* should **not** be selected as it is both a test name and a result*

* MedDRA is used only for test names, not test results, in the E2B data elements for Results of Tests and Procedures

Test name terms without qualifiers are not intended for use in other data fields capturing information such as ARs/AEs and medical history. The use of the Unqualified Test Name Term List is optional and may be used to identify the inappropriate selection of these terms in data fields other than the test name data element. It is available for download from the MedDRA and JMO websites.

3.15 Medication Errors, Accidental Exposures and Occupational Exposures

3.15.1 Medication errors

For the purposes of term selection and analysis of MedDRA-coded data, medication errors are defined as any unintentional and preventable event that may cause or lead to inappropriate medication use or patient harm while the medication is in the control of the health care professional, patient or consumer.

The online Concept Descriptions contain descriptions of the interpretation and use of certain medication error terms (e.g., “Dispensing error”).

All information that is relevant (including contextual) should be available during term selection.

For further information, please refer to Section 3 of the MedDRA Points to Consider Companion Document which contains detailed examples, guidance, and “Questions and Answers” on medication errors (see Appendix, Section 4.2 Links and References).

Reports of medication errors may or may not include information about clinical consequences.

3.15.1.1 Medication errors reported <u>with</u> clinical consequences

If a medication error is reported with clinical consequences, select terms for both the medication error and the clinical consequences.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Patient was administered wrong drug and experienced hypotension.	*Wrong drug administered* *Hypotension*	
Because of similar sounding drug names, the wrong drug was dispensed; as a result, the patient took the wrong drug and experienced a rash.	*Wrong drug dispensed* *Wrong drug administered* *Drug name sound-alike* *Rash*	The ‘originating’ error (Wrong drug dispensed) and reported additional or ‘consequent’ errors and contributing factors (Drug name sound-alike) stated in the report should all be coded, while not subtracting or inferring information

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Insulin preparation was given using the wrong syringe resulting in the administration of an overdose. The patient developed hypoglycaemia.	*Drug administered in wrong device* *Accidental overdose* *Hypoglycaemia*	If an overdose is reported in the context of a medication error, the more specific term LLT *Accidental overdose* can be selected (see also Section 3.18)

3.15.1.2 Medication errors and potential medication errors reported without clinical consequences

Medication errors without clinical consequences are not ARs/AEs. However, it is important to record the occurrence or **potential** occurrence of a medication error. Select a term that is closest to the description of medication error reported.

Intercepted medication error: For the purposes of term selection and analysis of MedDRA-coded data, an intercepted medication error refers to the situation where a medication error has occurred, but is prevented from reaching the patient or consumer. The intercepted error term should reflect the stage at which the error occurred, rather than the stage at which it was intercepted.

If a medication error report specifically states that there were no clinical consequences, the **preferred option** is to select only a term for the medication error. Alternatively, a term for the medication error and the additional LLT *No adverse effect* can be selected (see Section 3.21).

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Preferred Option
	Intramuscular formulation administered by other route	✓

Reported	LLT Selected	Preferred Option
Intramuscular formulation medication was given intravenously instead of intramuscularly but the patient did not experience any adverse effects.	*Intramuscular formulation administered by other route* *No adverse effect*	

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Pharmacist notices that the names of two drugs look similar and is concerned that this may result in someone getting a wrong drug	*Drug name look-alike* *Potential for medication error, wrong drug*	This example is a potential medication error. LLT *Drug name look-alike* is a contributing factor, and LLT *Potential for medication error, wrong drug* indicates that there is a potential medication error including the error type.
The physician prescribed the wrong dose of the drug; the error was identified at the time of dispensing	*Intercepted drug prescribing error* *Drug dose prescribing error*	

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
The pharmacist dispensed the wrong drug because of a similar label design but the patient realised the error and did not take the drug	*Intercepted drug dispensing error* *Drug label look-alike* *Wrong drug dispensed*	The intercepted error terms reflect the stage at which the error occurred, which is not necessarily the stage at which it was intercepted. Capture the type of error that was intercepted and contributing factors when reported.
Patient forgot to take his scheduled dose of drug X	*Forgot to take product*	LLT *Forgot to take product* (PT *Product dose omission in error*) is an example of an unintentional dose omission/missed dose. See the Points to Consider Companion Document for additional examples of the various scenarios of dose omissions.
Patient's scheduled dose of drug X was not administered because he was undergoing surgery that day	*Intentional dose omission*	This is an example of an intentional dose omission/missed dose. It is not a medication error.

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Due to Drug X shortage, patient was unable to take her medication for a week	*Drug shortage* *Temporary interruption of therapy*	This event is neither intentional nor a medication error. Use LLT *Temporary interruption of therapy* (PT *Therapy interrupted*, HLT *Therapeutic procedures NEC*) and capture the specific external factor which caused the interruption of therapy.

3.15.1.3 Medication monitoring errors

For the purposes of term selection and analysis of MedDRA-coded data, a medication monitoring error is an error that occurs in the process of monitoring the effect of the medication through clinical assessment and/or laboratory data.

It can also refer to monitoring errors in following instructions or information pertinent to the safe use of the medication, such as the specific scenario regarding the term LLT *Documented hypersensitivity to administered drug* in the example below.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Patient with sulfa allergy documented in patient's medical file is administered a sulfonamide-based drug and experienced wheezing	*Documented hypersensitivity to administered drug* *Wheezing*	This medication error refers to the situation when a patient is administered a drug that is documented in the patient's medical file to cause a hypersensitivity reaction in the patient.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
The patient's liver enzymes were measured every six months instead of the recommended monthly schedule	*Drug monitoring procedure incorrectly performed*	The monthly monitoring schedule is in the label for this drug. This is an example of incorrect monitoring of laboratory tests recommended in the use of a drug.
Patient taking lithium-based drug did not have his lithium levels measured	*Therapeutic drug monitoring analysis not performed*	This is an example of not monitoring the therapeutic drug level to ensure that it is within the therapeutic range as recommended in the label for this drug.

There are specific medication error situations when the product is prescribed, dispensed, or co-administered with specific drugs, with specific foods, or to patients with specific disease states, or genetic variants, and the product label describes known noxious effects of these interactions. Select a medication error term for the type of interaction, such as those listed below.

If the report indicates that this is intentional misuse or intentional off label use, select the appropriate terms representing the intentional nature of the event. If the report does not provide information about whether the event was accidental or intentional, select an appropriate interaction issue term, e.g., LLT *Labelled drug-drug interaction issue*.

Medication Error Terms – Labelled Interactions
Labelled drug-drug interaction medication error
Labelled drug-food interaction medication error
Labelled drug-disease interaction medication error
Labelled drug-genetic interaction medication error

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Patient became pregnant whilst taking an antifungal drug and an oral contraceptive. She was unaware of the interaction warning in the label.	*Labelled drug-drug interaction medication error* *Pregnancy on oral contraceptive*	Product is labelled for this drug-drug interaction (see also Section 3.20)
Patient drank grapefruit juice by mistake whilst taking a calcium channel blocker.	*Labelled drug-food interaction medication error*	Product is labelled for this drug-food interaction with grapefruit juice
Patient with renal failure is accidentally prescribed a drug that is contraindicated in renal failure	*Labelled drug-disease interaction medication error* *Contraindicated drug prescribed*	Product is labelled for this drug-disease interaction. LLT *Contraindicated drug prescribed* provides additional information about the nature of the labelled interaction medication error and the stage at which the error occurred.

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Patient was inadvertently given a drug that is contraindicated in patients who are cytochrome P450 2D6 poor metabolisers	*Labelled drug-genetic interaction medication error* *Contraindicated drug administered* *CYP2D6 poor metaboliser status*	Product is labelled for this drug-genetic variant interaction

3.15.1.4 Do not infer a medication error

Do not infer that a medication error has occurred unless specific information is provided. This includes inferring that extra dosing, overdose, or underdose has occurred (see Section 3.18).

It is not recommended to use terms from HLGT *Medication errors and other product use errors and issues* to describe a scenario which refers to an intentional use issue such as abuse, misuse, or off label use (see also Section 3.16 for more information and examples).

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Patient took only half of the minimum recommended dose in the label	*Underdose*	Based on this report, it is not known whether the underdose is intentional or accidental. If information is available, select the more specific LLT *Accidental underdose* or LLT *Intentional underdose* as appropriate.

3.15.2 Accidental exposures and occupational exposures

3.15.2.1 Accidental exposures

The principles for Section 3.15.1 (Medication errors) also apply to accidental exposures.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Child accidentally took grandmother's pills and experienced projectile vomiting	*Accidental drug intake by child* *Vomiting projectile*	
Father applying topical steroid to his arms accidentally exposed his child to the drug by carrying her	*Accidental exposure to product by child* *Exposure via skin contact*	The “exposure to” term captures the agent of exposure, i.e., a product, and the “exposure via” term captures the route/vehicle of exposure, i.e., skin contact

3.15.2.2 Occupational exposures

For the purposes of term selection and analysis of MedDRA-coded data, occupational exposure encompasses the “chronic” exposure to an agent (including therapeutic products) during the normal course of one's occupation, and could include additional scenarios in specific regulatory regions. For example, occupational exposure may additionally relate to a more acute, accidental form of exposure that occurs in the context of one's occupation. In these regions, occupational exposure for healthcare workers could be of particular interest.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Physical therapist developed a photosensitivity rash on hands after exposure to an NSAID-containing pain relief cream that she applied to a patient	*Occupational exposure via skin contact with product* *Photosensitive rash*	
Pathologist chronically exposed to formaldehyde developed nasopharyngeal carcinoma	*Occupational exposure to toxic agent* *Nasopharyngeal carcinoma*	Exposure to formaldehyde is a known risk factor for this type of malignancy
Nurse splashed injectable drug in her own eye resulting in excessive tearing	*Accidental contact of product with eye* *Excess tears*	An alternative term – e.g., LLT *Occupational exposure to product via eye* – could be selected to replace LLT *Accidental contact of product with eye*, if applicable to regional requirements where acute exposures are considered to be occupational exposures

3.16 Misuse, Abuse and Addiction

Term selection for cases of misuse, abuse and addiction can pose challenges since the terms in lay language may overlap to some extent; the specific circumstances of each case/reported event provide essential information clarifying the reported concepts. Therefore, all information that is relevant (including contextual) should be available during term selection. Medical judgment and regional regulatory considerations need to be applied.

It may also be useful to consider these concepts as shown in the table below:

Concept	Intentional?	By Whom?	Therapeutic Use?	Additional Sections in this Document
Misuse	Yes	Patient/consumer	Yes*	3.16.1
Abuse	Yes	Patient/consumer	No	3.16.2
Addiction	Yes	Patient/consumer	No	3.16.3
The concepts Medication error and Off label use are placed here for comparison reasons:				
Medication error	No	Patient/consumer **or** healthcare professional	Yes	3.15
Off label use	Yes	Healthcare professional	Yes	3.27

* Definitions of misuse may not always include the concept of therapeutic use; misuse may be similar to the concept of abuse in some regions. (For further information see section 3.16.1)

Select the most specific term available and always check the MedDRA hierarchy above the selected term to be sure it is appropriate for the reported information. In some cases, it may be appropriate to select more than one MedDRA LLT to represent the reported information.

It is not recommended to select terms from the medication errors and issues hierarchy in addition to terms for misuse, abuse or off label use to describe the same scenario.

For example, in a case of drug abuse, coding the steps of unapproved drug alteration for abuse (such as crushing a tablet for snorting) with terms from the HLGT *Medication errors and other product use errors and issues* may lead to over-representation or reporting of events which are not actual medication errors (i.e., the action was intentional, not accidental).

However, if a case involves more than one scenario, select terms for each appropriately.

3.16.1 Misuse

For the purposes of term selection and analysis of MedDRA-coded data, **misuse** is the intentional use for a therapeutic purpose by a patient or consumer of a product–over-the-counter or prescription – other than as prescribed or not in accordance with the authorised product information.

The word “misuse” in lay language may overlap with the concepts of abuse, off label use and medication errors. Therefore, all information that is relevant (including contextual) should be available during term selection. The term selected should represent the correct reported scenario.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Patient deliberately took the medication twice daily instead of once daily	*Intentional misuse in dosing frequency*

3.16.2 Abuse

For the purposes of term selection and analysis of MedDRA-coded data, **abuse** is the intentional, non-therapeutic use by a patient or consumer of a product – over-the counter or prescription – for a perceived reward or desired non-therapeutic effect including, but not limited to, “getting high” (euphoria). Abuse may occur with a single use, sporadic use or persistent use of the product.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Athlete used anabolic steroid preparation to enhance performance	*Steroid abuse*	

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Patient occasionally uses opioid product to get high	*Opioid abuse, episodic use*	
Patient deliberately ingested the topical medication for its psychoactive effect	*Drug abuse* *Intentional use by incorrect route*	LLT *Intentional use by incorrect route* (PT *Intentional product use issue*) provides additional information about the nature of the drug abuse
A patient misused prescription opioids to get high.	*Opioid abuse*	The context clearly indicates drug abuse and not intentional misuse for a medical purpose.

See Section 3.24.1 and 3.24.2 for additional references to “abuse” terms in MedDRA.

3.16.3 Addiction

For the purposes of term selection and analysis of MedDRA-coded data, **addiction** is an overwhelming desire by a patient or consumer to take a drug for non-therapeutic purposes together with inability to control or stop its use despite harmful consequences. Addiction can occur because drug induces physical dependence and consequently a withdrawal syndrome, but this is not an essential feature; and addiction can occur because of a desire to experience the drug's psychological, behavioural or physical effects.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Patient became dependent on crack cocaine	*Dependence on cocaine*

Reported	LLT Selected
Patient became addicted to a deliberately ingested topical medication for its psychoactive effect	*Drug addiction* *Intentional use by incorrect route*

See Section 3.24.1 for additional references to “addict/addiction” terms in MedDRA.

3.16.4 Drug diversion

For the purposes of term selection and analysis of MedDRA-coded data, **drug diversion** means that a drug is diverted from legal and medically necessary uses toward illegal uses.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Pharmacist stole medications from the pharmacy and sold them to others for recreational use	*Drug diversion*
The patient sold his controlled drug prescription to another person	*Drug diversion*

3.17 Transmission of Infectious Agent via Product

If a report of transmission of an infectious agent via a product is received, select a term for the transmission. If the infection is identified, select a second term for the specific infection; if appropriate, a product quality issue term can also be selected (see Section 3.28).

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Patient received a nasal spray product and later developed a severe acute nasal infection with *Burkholderia cepacia*. Cultures of unopened containers of the nasal spray grew B. cepacia	*Transmission of an infectious agent via product* *Product contamination bacterial* *Burkholderia cepacia infection* *Acute rhinitis*
Patient received a blood transfusion and developed Hepatitis C	*Transfusion-transmitted infectious disease* *Hepatitis C*

Medical judgment should be used if the reporter does not explicitly state transmission of an infectious agent via a product but this could be implied by other data within the report. In this instance, select LLT *Suspected transmission of an infectious agent via product*.

3.18 Overdose, Toxicity and Poisoning

Accidental overdose terms are grouped under HLT *Product administration errors and issues*; other overdose terms are grouped under HLT *Overdoses NEC*. Toxicity and poisoning terms are grouped under HLT *Poisoning and toxicity*.

For the purposes of term selection and analysis of MedDRA-coded data, overdose is more than the maximum recommended dose (in quantity and/or concentration), i.e., an excessive dose (see online Concept Descriptions.)

If overdose, poisoning or toxicity is explicitly reported, select the appropriate term.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Patient took an overdose	*Overdose*	Based on this report, it is not known whether the overdose is intentional or accidental. If information is available, select the more specific LLT *Accidental overdose* or LLT *Intentional overdose* as appropriate.
A child was accidentally poisoned when she ingested a chemical cleaning product	*Accidental poisoning* *Chemical poisoning*	
Patient deliberately took an overdose of analgesic pills to treat his worsening arthritis	*Intentional overdose*	LLT *Arthritis aggravated* can be selected as the indication for treatment
The dose taken was above the recommended maximum dose in the label	*Overdose*	Based on this report, it is not known whether the overdose is intentional or accidental. If information is available, select the more specific LLT *Accidental overdose* or LLT *Intentional overdose* as appropriate.

3.18.1 Overdose reported <u>with</u> clinical consequences

Select terms for overdose and for clinical consequences reported in association with an overdose.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Stomach upset from study drug overdose	*Overdose* *Stomach upset*

3.18.2 Overdose reported without clinical consequences

If an overdose report specifically states that there were no clinical consequences, the **preferred option** is to select only a term for the overdose. Alternatively, a term for the overdose and the additional LLT *No adverse effect* can be selected (see Section 3.21).

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Preferred Option
Patient received an overdose of medicine without any adverse consequences	*Overdose*	✓
	Overdose *No adverse effect*	

3.19 Device-related Terms

3.19.1 Device-related event reported with clinical consequences

If available, select a term that reflects both the device-related event and the clinical consequence, if so reported.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Patient with a vascular implant developed an infection of the implant	*Vascular implant infection*

Reported	LLT Selected
Patient noted the prosthesis caused pain	*Medical device pain*

If there is no single MedDRA term reflecting the device-related event and the clinical consequence, select separate terms for both.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Ventricular tachycardia due to malfunction of device	*Device malfunction* *Ventricular tachycardia*
Partial denture fractured leading to tooth pain	*Dental prosthesis breakage* *Tooth pain*

3.19.2 Device-related event reported <u>without</u> clinical consequences

If a device-related event is reported in the absence of clinical consequences, select the appropriate term.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Medical device breakage	*Device breakage*
My patch is leaking on my arm	*Leaking patch*

3.20 Drug Interactions

This term includes reactions between drugs and other drugs, food, devices and alcohol. In this document, “drug” includes biologic products.

Labelled drug interactions may be medication errors (see Section 3.15.1.3).

3.20.1 Reporter specifically states an interaction

Select an interaction term and additional term(s) for any reported medical event.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Torsade de pointes with suspected drug interaction	*Drug interaction* *Torsade de pointes*
Patient drank cranberry juice which interacted with anticoagulant drug causing an INR increase	*Food interaction* *INR increased*

3.20.2 Reporter does <u>not</u> specifically state an interaction

Two products may be used together, but if the reporter does not specifically state that an interaction has occurred, select terms only for the medical events reported.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Patient was started on an anti-seizure medication and a heart medication and developed syncope	*Syncope*
Patient was already on an anti-seizure medication and was started on a heart medication, and anti-seizure medication levels increased	*Anticonvulsant drug level increased*

3.21 No Adverse Effect and "Normal" Terms

3.21.1 No adverse effect

LLT *No adverse effect* can be used when absence of an AR/AE is specifically reported, despite exposure to a product (see Sections 3.15.1.2 and 3.18.2).

Some organisations may want to record LLT *No adverse effect* for administrative purposes (e.g., pregnancy registries, overdose and medication error reports).

3.21.2 Use of "normal" terms

Terms for normal states and outcomes can be used as needed.

Examples of Terms for "Normal" States and Outcomes
Sinus rhythm
Normal baby
Normal electrocardiogram

3.22 Unexpected Therapeutic Effect

Some organisations may want to record reports of a beneficial effect of a product apart from the reason it had been given. (Such effects are not usually considered ARs/AEs).

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
A bald patient was pleased that he grew hair while using an antihypertensive product	*Unexpected beneficial therapeutic response* *Hair growth increased*

3.23 Modification of Effect

It is important to record modification of effect (e.g., increased, prolonged) although it is not always an AR/AE.

3.23.1 Lack of effect

The **preferred option** is to select only the “lack of effect” term even if consequences are also reported. However, terms may also be selected for events associated with the lack of effect.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Preferred Option
Patient took drug for a headache, and her headache didn't go away	*Drug ineffective*	✓
	Drug ineffective *Headache*	
Antibiotic didn't work	*Lack of drug effect*	
Patient took drug for thrombosis prophylaxis but she developed a deep vein thrombosis in her left leg	*Drug ineffective*	✓
	Drug ineffective *Deep vein thrombosis leg*	

3.23.2 Do not infer lack of effect

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
AIDS patient taking anti-HIV drug died	*Death*	Do not assume lack of effect in this instance. Select only a term for death (see Section 3.2).

3.23.3 Increased, decreased and prolonged effect

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Patient had increased effect from drug A	*Increased drug effect*
Patient had decreased effect from drug A	*Drug effect decreased*
Patient had prolonged effect from drug A	*Drug effect prolonged*

3.24 Social Circumstances

3.24.1 Use of terms in this SOC

Terms in SOC *Social circumstances* represent social factors and may be suitable to record social and medical history data. Such terms are not generally suitable for recording ARs/AEs; however, in certain instances, terms in SOC *Social circumstances* are the only available terms for recording ARs/AEs or may add valuable clinical information.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Patient's ability to drive was impaired	*Impaired driving ability*

Terms in SOC *Social circumstances* are not multiaxial and, unlike terms in other "disorder" SOCs in MedDRA (e.g., SOC *Gastrointestinal disorders*), they generally refer to a person, not to a medical condition.

Be aware of the impact that terms in SOC *Social circumstances* may have on data retrieval, analysis and reporting as illustrated in the table below:

Term in SOC Social circumstances ("person")	Similar term in "Disorder" SOC ("condition")
Alcoholic	*Alcoholism*
Drug abuser	*Drug abuse*
Drug addict	*Drug addiction*
Glue sniffer	*Glue sniffing*
Smoker	*Nicotine dependence*

Note that "abuse" terms not associated with drugs/substances are in this SOC, regardless of whether they refer to the person or to the condition, as illustrated in the table below:

LLT	PT
Child abuse	*Child abuse*
Child abuser	
Elder abuse	*Elder abuse*
Elder abuser	

(See Section 3.24.2 concerning illegal/criminal acts.)

3.24.2 Illegal acts of crime or abuse

Terms for illegal acts of crime and abuse (excluding those related to drug/substance abuse) are in SOC *Social circumstances*, such as LLT *Physical assault*.

LLTs representing the **perpetrator** are linked to PTs describing the unlawful act committed. PTs representing the **victim** of unlawful acts generally begin with "*Victim of…* ".

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Patient's history indicates that patient is a known sexual offender	*Sexual offender*	**Perpetrator**; LLT *Sexual offender* links to PT *Sexual abuse* in SOC *Social circumstances*
Patient was a childhood sexual assault victim	*Childhood sexual assault victim*	**Victim**; LLT *Childhood sexual assault victim* links to PT *Victim of sexual abuse* in SOC *Social circumstances*

3.25 Medical and Social History

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
History of gastrointestinal bleed and hysterectomy	*Gastrointestinal bleed* *Hysterectomy*
Patient is a cigarette smoker with coronary artery disease	*Cigarette smoker* *Coronary artery disease*

3.26 Indication for Product Use

Indications can be reported as medical conditions, prophylaxis of conditions, replacement therapies, procedures (such as anaesthesia induction) and verbatim terms such as "anti-hypertension". Terms from almost any MedDRA SOC – including SOC *Investigations* – may be selected to record indications.

Regulatory authorities may have specific requirements for certain aspects of term selection for indications (e.g., for indications within regulated product information). Please refer to the regulatory authority's specific guidance for such issues.

3.26.1 Medical conditions

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Hypertension	*Hypertension*
Anti-hypertensive	
Chemotherapy for breast cancer	*Breast cancer*
I took it for my cold symptoms	*Cold symptoms*

If the only information reported is the type of therapy, select the most specific term.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Patient received chemotherapy	*Chemotherapy*
Patient received antibiotics	*Antibiotic therapy*

It may not be clear if the reported indication is a medical condition or a desired outcome of therapy. The term selected in either case may be the same.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Weight loss	*Weight loss*	Unclear if the purpose is to induce weight loss or to treat an underweight patient
Immunosuppression	*Immunosuppression*	Unclear if the purpose is to induce or to treat immunosuppression

3.26.2 Complex indications

Term selection for some indications (e.g., in regulated product information) may be complex and require selection of more than one LLT to represent the information completely, depending on the circumstances.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Treatment of aggression in autism	*Aggression*	The products do not treat the underlying autism, thalassaemia, or myocardial infarction, but they do address the associated signs/symptoms (aggression, chronic iron overload, atherothrombosis). It may be necessary to select LLT *Autism*, LLT *Thalassaemia major*, or LLT *Myocardial infarction* based on regional regulatory requirements.
Treatment of chronic iron overload in thalassaemia major	*Chronic iron overload*	
Prevention of atherothrombotic events in patients with myocardial infarction	*Atherothrombosis prophylaxis*	

3.26.3 Indications with genetic markers or abnormalities

For indications that describe a genetic marker or abnormality associated with a medical condition, select a combination term that represents both concepts, if available. See also examples in Section 3.5 Combination Terms.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Non small cell lung cancer with K-ras mutation	*Non-small cell lung cancer* *K-ras gene mutation*

3.26.4 Prevention and prophylaxis

When an indication for prevention or prophylaxis is reported, select the specific MedDRA term, if it exists (Note: the words “prevention” and “prophylaxis” are synonymous in the context of MedDRA).

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Prophylaxis of arrhythmia	*Arrhythmia prophylaxis*
Prevention of migraine	*Migraine prophylaxis*

If there is no MedDRA term containing “prevention” or “prophylaxis”, choose one of the following options. The **preferred option** is to select a general prevention/ prophylaxis term **and** a term for the condition. Alternatively, select a term for the condition alone **or** a prevention/prophylaxis term alone.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Preferred Option	Comment
Prevention of hepatotoxicity	*Prevention* *Hepatotoxicity*	✓	Represents both the prevention/prophylaxis concept and the condition
	Hepatotoxicity		Represents the condition
	Prevention		Represents the prevention/prophylaxis concept

3.26.5 Procedures and diagnostic tests as indications

Select the appropriate term if the product is indicated for performing a procedure or a diagnostic test.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Induction of anaesthesia	*Induction of anaesthesia*
Contrast agent for angiogram	*Angiogram*
Contrast agent for coronary angiogram	*Coronary angiogram*

3.26.6 Supplementation and replacement therapies

Terms for supplemental and replacement therapies are in SOC Surgical and medical procedures (see Section 3.13). If the product indication is for supplementation or replacement therapy, select the closest term.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Testosterone replacement therapy	*Androgen replacement therapy*
Prenatal vitamin	*Vitamin supplementation*

3.26.7 Indication not reported

If clarification cannot be obtained, select LLT *Drug use for unknown indication*.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Aspirin was taken for an unknown indication	*Drug use for unknown indication*

3.27 Off Label Use

For the purposes of term selection and analysis of MedDRA-coded data, the concept of “off label use” relates to situations where a healthcare professional intentionally prescribes, dispenses, or recommends a product for a medical purpose not in accordance with the authorised product information (consider also the table in Section 3.16). Off label use terms should only be selected when off label use is specifically mentioned in the reported verbatim information. When recording off label use, consider that product information and/or regulations/requirements may differ between regulatory regions. For cases of suspected off label use see section 3.27.3.

3.27.1 Off label use when reported as an indication

If a medical condition/indication is reported **along with “off label use”**, the **preferred option** is to select terms for the medical condition/indication and off label use. Alternatively, select a term for the medical condition/indication alone. Select LLT *Off label use* alone **only** if it is the only information available.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Preferred Option
Hypertension; this is off label use	*Off label use in unapproved indication* *Hypertension*	✓
	Hypertension	

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Used off label	*Off label use*

3.27.2 Off label use when reported with an AR/AE

If an AR/AE occurs in the setting of off label use for a medical condition/indication, the **preferred option** is to select a term for off label use, and a term for the medical condition/indication in addition to a term for the AR/AE. Alternatively, select a term for the medical condition/indication and a term for the AR/AE.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Preferred Option	Comment
Patient was administered a drug off label for pulmonary hypertension and suffered a stroke	*Off label use in unapproved indication* *Pulmonary hypertension* *Stroke*	✓	In this example, *Pulmonary hypertension* is reported as an indication, *Stroke* is reported as an AR/AE. *Off label use* term may be coded along with the indication and/or along with the AR/AE.
	Pulmonary hypertension *Stroke*		

3.27.3 Suspected off label use

Terms for “suspected off label use” may be selected when medical judgment indicates that the product was used off label although not stated in the reported verbatim information. Medical knowledge and the rationale supporting such a decision should be documented (see Section 2.2). Therefore, all information that

is relevant (including contextual) should be available during term selection and quality assurance.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Drug A was prescribed to a 6-year-old child	*Suspected off label use in unapproved age group*	Drug A is only approved for adults, but treatment of paediatric patients is an accepted medical practice. Although off label use is not explicitly stated, it is suspected based on medical knowledge.

However, if there is no medical knowledge about this drug's use in paediatric patients, then there is no basis to suspect off label use. In this scenario, select LLT *Drug prescribed for unapproved age group*.

A medication error should be ruled out if suspecting an off label use scenario. ARs/AEs and medication errors such as dosing errors can occur in the context of off label use and should be coded when reported.

3.28 Product Quality Issues

It is important to recognise product quality issues as they may have implications for patient safety. They may be reported in the context of adverse events or as part of a product quality monitoring system.

Product quality issues are defined as abnormalities that may be introduced during the manufacturing/labelling, packaging, shipping, handling or storage of the products. They may occur with or without clinical consequences. Such concepts may pose a challenge for term selection.

Familiarity with HLGT *Product quality, supply, distribution, manufacturing and quality system issues* (in SOC *Product issues*) is essential for term selection.

Under this HLGT are categories of specific product quality issues such as HLT *Product packaging issues*, HLT *Product physical issues*, HLT *Manufacturing facilities and equipment issues*, HLT *Counterfeit, falsified and substandard products*, etc. Navigating down to the appropriate LLTs from the MedDRA hierarchy is the optimal approach for term selection.

Explanations of the interpretations and uses of certain product quality issue terms (e.g., “Product coating incomplete”) are found in the online MedDRA Concept Descriptions.

3.28.1 Product quality issue reported <u>with</u> clinical consequences

If a product quality issue results in clinical consequences, term(s) for the product quality issue and the clinical consequences should be selected.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
New bottle of drug tablets has unusual chemical smell that made me nauseous	*Product smell abnormal* *Nauseous*	
I switched from one brand to another of my blood pressure medication, and I developed smelly breath	*Product substitution issue brand to brand* *Smelly breath*	
Consumer noted that the toothpaste they had purchased caused a stinging sensation in the mouth. Subsequent investigation of the product lot number revealed that the toothpaste was a counterfeit product.	*Product counterfeit* *Stinging mouth*	

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Patient reported severe burning in his nose after using nasal drops that had a cloudy appearance. An investigation by the manufacturer revealed that impurities were found in the batch of nasal drops and that these had been introduced by a faulty piece of equipment.	*Nasal burning* *Product appearance cloudy* *Product impurities found* *Manufacturing equipment issue*	Specific product defects and issues with manufacturing systems may be reported subsequently as part of a root cause analysis

3.28.2 Product quality issue reported <u>without</u> clinical consequences

It is important to capture the occurrence of product quality issues even in the absence of clinical consequences.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected
Sterile lumbar puncture kit received in broken packaging (sterility compromised)	*Product sterile packaging disrupted*

3.28.3 Product quality issue vs. medication error

It is important to distinguish between a product quality issue and a medication error.

Product quality issues are defined as abnormalities that may be introduced during the manufacturing/labelling, packaging, shipping, handling or storage of the products. They may occur with or without clinical consequences.

Medication errors are defined as any unintentional and preventable event that may cause or lead to inappropriate medication use or patient harm while the medication is in the control of the health care professional, patient or consumer.

Explanations of the interpretations of product quality issue terms are found in the online Concept Descriptions.

Example

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Pharmacist dispensing Drug A inadvertently attached a product label for Drug B	*Wrong label placed on medication during dispensing*	Medication error
The drug store clerk noted that the wrong product label was attached to some bottles in a shipment of mouthwash	*Product label on wrong product*	Product quality issue
The mother administered an underdose of antibiotic because the lines on the dropper were illegible	*Product dropper calibration unreadable* *Accidental underdose*	Product quality issue and medication error. If underdose is reported in the context of a medication error, the more specific LLT *Accidental underdose* can be selected.

SECTION 4 – APPENDIX

4.1 Versioning

Please refer to the most recent version of the MedDRA Best Practices document for information on versioning.

4.2 Links and References

The following documents and tools can be found on the MedDRA website: (www.meddra.org):

- MedDRA Term Selection: Points to Consider Condensed Version
- MedDRA Data Retrieval and Presentation: Points to Consider document (also available on the JMO website: www.pmrj.jp/jmo/)
- MedDRA Data Retrieval and Presentation: Points to Consider Condensed Version
- MedDRA Points to Consider Companion Document (also available on the JMO website: www.pmrj.jp/jmo/)
- MedDRA Introductory Guide
- MedDRA Change Request Information document
- MedDRA Web-Based Browser *
- MedDRA Mobile Browser *
- MedDRA Desktop Browser
- MedDRA Version Report (lists all changes in new version) *
- MedDRA Version Analysis Tool (compares any two versions) *
- Unqualified Test Name Term List
- MedDRA Best Practices
- Transition Date for the Next MedDRA Version

* Requires user ID and password to access

Online MedDRA Concept Descriptions

- Via MedDRA browsers