

Clinical Terminology

By **term** we mean a word or a group of words designating something, especially in a particular field, e.g. anatomical terms, medical terms (termini medicales).

By **terminology** we mean 1. the system of terms belonging to a specialized subject, nomenclature.

Sometimes these words differ in meaning, but most commonly they are similar. Clinical terminology is made up of Greek words/stems.

Clinical terms designate different kinds of diseases, symptoms, types of treatment of different pathologies, diagnosis, etc.

In this section of the course we are going to deal with the main ways of word-building (mainly of medical terms).

In this term we're starting Clinical Terminology and here you'll:

- Learn to divide medical terms into their component parts – stems, affixes.
- Learn basic stems, prefixes, suffixes and you'll learn how to build new terms with the help of prefixes and suffixes.

There are 3 major objectives to keep in mind as you study clinical terminology.

1) You should be able to analyze words structurally. When we analyze words, our main procedure will be dividing word compounds into smaller meaningful elements.

e.g. **sub cost al is**

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

prefix root suffix ending (termination)

long

You see we've divided it into 4 smaller parts. Each of these parts is called a morpheme. The root is the most important of all. The prefix and suffix are the next important parts. The ending specifies the word's grammatical characteristics.

In general 3 elements are important in each word. The root, prefixes and suffixes have a lexical meaning. By **lexical meaning** we mean objects, properties or

actions. The ending or termination has only a grammatical meaning. By ***grammatical meaning*** we mean how it agrees with other words.

The root, prefix and suffix are called **terminological units** or **combining forms** or **stems** (there are 3 of them in the example above).

How do we know that there are 3 combining forms/stems here?

- 1) Because each of them may occur in many other words, such as **sub-**, **cost**, etc. (sucostalis, sublingualis, subcutaneus, submandibularis, costa (Pl), costalis)
- 2) Because each of these parts also must retain its meaning in all words it is used in.

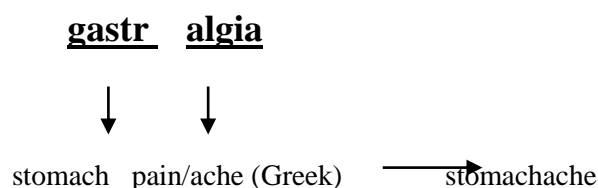
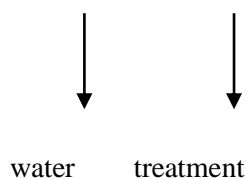
TERM-BUILDING

Sometimes we deal with simple words and compound words (these words may consist of 2 derivational stems).

Ways of building clinical words

1) Word compounds.

This is combining two or more stems together. It is a purely Greek way of forming new words. You just take 2 stems and join them together. Let's take an example: **hydr o therapia**



This is one of the skills we're going to develop in this term (to learn to single out elements and explain the meaning of the word considering its constituent elements).

If we take the word **“gastralgia”**, it consists of 2 stems and the ending. In the word **“hydrotherapia”** there are also 2 stems. What is the letter **“o”** for? It is a **linking/combining vowel**. In this word the combining **“o”** links 2 roots (if the 2nd root starts with a consonant, **“o”** is used).

The next way of word-building:

2) Using prefixes.

When I give you the stem **“tonia”**(“tension”), you can derive a lot of words with it.

e.g. hypertonia → high blood pressure

hypotonia → low blood pressure

isotonia → (physics) equal pressure/tension

dystonia → disorder/dysfunction of blood pressure

atonia → absence/lack of tension

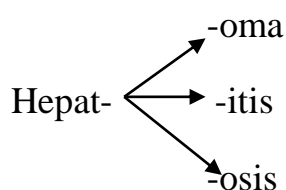
There is one more thing which should be noted: when we deal with prefixes or suffixes, we never use a linking vowel.

3) Using suffixes.

Hepar, atis n

Stem = GS – ending

Hepatis – is = **hepat**



- First, let's write down a list of suffixes with the meaning "pertaining to/related to":

-al, -ar, -is

e.g. **paranasalis, e** (related to the nose, near the nose)

pulmonalis, e (pertaining to the lungs)

corticalis, e (related to the cortex)

cerebralis, e (pertaining to the brain)

articularis, e (related to the joints)

- Now the suffixes with the meaning "the object is related to different organs):

-ic, -ac

e.g. **gastricus, a, um** (related to the stomach)

hepaticus, a, um

thoracicus, a, um

zygomaticus, a, um

cardiacus, a, um (a Greek word)

iliacus, a, um (related to the ileum)

- The suffixes with the same meaning:
-in

e.g. **palatinus, a, um** (related to the palate)

pelvinus, a, um (related to the pelvis)

uterinus, a, um (related to the uterus)

- The next suffix is used both in Greek and Latin words in the meaning "pertaining to/related to":

-e

e.g. **osseus, a, um** (related to the bones)

sanguineus, a, um

pharyngeus, a, um

subcutaneus, a, um

oesophageus, a, um

- The next suffix has the same meaning:

-i

e.g. **urinarius, a, um** (urinary)

proprius, a, um

- The next suffix has a different meaning of “smth. which is rich in the quality indicated”:

-os

e.g. **mucosus, a, um** (rich in mucosa)

fibrosus, a, um (rich in fibers)

cavernosus, a, um (rich in caverns)

- The next suffix has the meaning “similar to/be in shape like”:

-id (e)

e.g. **pterygoideus, a, um** (wing-shaped)

NB! sphenoidalis, e (wedge-shaped)

- The next suffix has several meanings:

-gen + us, a, um

1) causing or generating/provoking smth.

It occurs in the pattern:

Disease/causative agent + - genus

e.g. cancer o genus (agents) - causing cancer

path o genus - causing diseases, disturbances



(a Greek word designating “disease/suffering”)

2) caused or provoked/generated by/originating in

It occurs in the pattern:

Organ/body part + -genus

organ+genus

e.g. neph o genus - caused by kidneys/of renal origin

(a Greek word designating “kidney”)

Let's take one more example:

e.g. cardi o genus - caused by the heart