The University of Hong Kong
Department of Pharmacology and Pharmacy

Standardized Terminologies and Translations for
Community Pharmacy Services

Version Number	Date	Remark
1.0	31 May 2024	Original version
1.1	14 Feb 2025	Updated version
1.2	6 Mar 2025	Updated version

Revision History

Date of Revision	Description
14 February 2025	Added session of "5.2 Primary Healthcare" and "5.3 Community Pharmacy"
6 March 2025	Revised session of "5.4 Community Pharmacy" Added session of "5.4 Community Pharmacist"

Disclaimer

The information and content provided in this document are intended for informational purposes only. The terminologies and translations provided in this document have been standardized to the best of our knowledge and based on available literature. However, it is important to note that language and terminology in the field may evolve over time. While the authors and contributors endeavor to ensure the accuracy of the information in this document, no express or implied warranty is given by the editors as to the accuracy of the information. The application of the terminologies and translations in this document should be exercised with careful consideration of individual contexts and specific needs. The authors and contributors of this document do not assume any liability or responsibility for any errors, omissions, or inaccuracies in the information provided, or for any actions taken based on the content of this document. Users of this document are strongly advised to consult relevant professional resources, guidelines, and regulations to ensure the appropriateness and validity of the information provided.

HKU Med
LKS Faculty of Medicine
Department of Pharmacology
& Pharmacy
香港大學藥理及藥劑學系

Table of Contents

1. Aim

The goal of this reference document is to establish a common language framework that promotes effective communication and understanding regarding primary healthcare and community pharmacy services among different stakeholders, including but not limited to pharmacists, healthcare providers, social service providers, researchers, general public, and the broader community. The alignment of terminology aims to enhance the consistency, quality, and accessibility of community pharmacy services in Hong Kong, ultimately leading to improved patient outcomes and safe medication use.

2. Objectives

The key objectives of this document include:

- To ensure consistent and clear consistent information exchange related to community pharmacy services and patient care among pharmacists, healthcare providers, patients and other stakeholders.
- To provide a common language for pharmacists to describe, document, and communicate about their services, enabling the development, implementation and evaluation of pharmacy services.
- To increase accessibility and improve understanding of health information and services for the public, thereby facilitating the utilization of community pharmacy services.
- To enable the collection of accurate and comparable data across organizations to support research and evaluation of service utilization, effectiveness, and health outcomes.
- To facilitate the sharing of best practices and comparison of pharmacy services in local and global context.

3. Scope

This reference document provides standardized translations and definitions of terminology commonly used in the key components of community pharmacy services. This includes language related to primary healthcare, dispensing, minor ailment services, and medication management services. Particular attention has been paid to include terms that are frequently misinterpreted or applied inconsistently. In some cases, terminologies for similar concepts are included, as they may be used in different contexts. The terms are presented in a logically structured format, beginning with more general concepts and progressing to a more specialized language.

4. How to use the document?

This reference document is intended to have broad application in supporting the development, promotion, delivery, and evaluation of community pharmacy services. By following this outline, organizations can effectively utilize terminologies to implement services, engage with communities, promote pharmacy services, conduct research, and enhance capacity-building activities to better serve diverse populations.

This document may be subjected to updates and revisions as new research, guidelines, and evidence become available. Users are encouraged to regularly refer to the latest versions of this document and related resources for the most up-to-date information.

5. Terminologies and Translations

5.1 Primary Healthcare

Terminology	Definition
Primary Healthcare 基層醫療健康	Primary healthcare is the first point of contact for individuals and families in a continuing healthcare process which entails the provision of accessible, comprehensive, continuing, co-ordinated and person-centred care in the context of family and community. It contributes to the health of the population through health promotion, disease prevention, disease management and supportive care. The service target of primary healthcare is not limited to grassroots, but is aimed at the whole community. (2) Remark: Primary healthcare vs primary care "Primary healthcare" is a whole-of-society approach to health that aims at ensuring the highest possible level of health and well-being and their equitable distribution by focusing on people's needs and preferences and as early as possible along the continuum from health promotion and disease prevention to treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care, and as close as feasible to people's everyday environment. "Primary healthcare" encompasses primary care. Primary care is the more visible and service-oriented core of primary healthcare.(2)
Secondary Care 第二層醫療服務	The medical care that is provided by specialist or facility upon referral by a primary care practitioner and that requires more specialised knowledge, skill, or equipment than the primary care practitioner can provide. In Hong Kong, secondary care services include acute and convalescent in-patient care, day surgery, specialist out-patient, and Accident and Emergency services. (2)
Tertiary Care 第三層醫療服務	It refers to highly complex and costly hospital care, usually with the application of advanced technology and multi-disciplinary specialised expertise. Examples of tertiary care services include organ transplants. (2)
Primary Prevention 第一層預防	Actions aimed at avoiding the manifestation of a disease (this may include actions to improve health through changing the impact of social and economic determinants on health; the provision of information on behavioural and medical health risks, alongside consultation and measures to decrease them at the personal and community level; nutritional and food supplementation;

	oral and dental hygiene education; and clinical preventive services such as immunisation and vaccination of children, adults and the elderly, as well as vaccination or post-exposure prophylaxis for people exposed to a communicable disease). (2)
Secondary Prevention 第二層預防	Healthcare activities that aim at early detection of disease, thereby increasing opportunities for interventions to prevent progression of the disease. Measures include health check-ups and disease screening, followed by necessary interventions after making the diagnosis. (2)
Tertiary Prevention 第三層預防	It refers to the rehabilitation of patients with an established disease to minimise residual disabilities and complications and maximise potential years of enjoyable life, thereby improving the quality of life even if the disease itself cannot be cured. Tertiary prevention programmes include patient empowerment and support, chronic disease management and community rehabilitation programmes. (2)

5.2 Community Pharmacy

Terminology	Definition
Community Pharmacy 社區藥房	A community pharmacy is an Authorized Seller of Poisons (ASP) regulated under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance, Cap. 138, in Hong Kong. These pharmacies are legally authorized to dispense controlled medicines under the supervision of a registered pharmacist. Community pharmacies serve as a key component of the community-based primary healthcare system, providing accessible, timely, and affordable care to the public. The objective of community pharmacies is to ensure the quality and effective supply of medicines and other products, supporting treatment and health preservation while advising on their safe, proper, and effective use for patients and healthcare professionals. Community pharmacies offer a range of services, including medication dispensing, medication management, health consultations, patient education, health promotion and screening services, thereby enhancing patient care and public health in the community.

5.3 Community Pharmacist

Terminology	Definition
Community Pharmacist 社區藥劑師	A community pharmacist is a healthcare professional who provides accessible and affordable care to the

public, serving as the initial point of contact in the primary healthcare setting.

Community pharmacists play a vital role in promoting better health and safer medication use by:

(a) Acting as gatekeepers for health and medication safety through dispensing medication accurately and providing individualized counselling;
(b) Offering personalized health advice on a walk-in basis;
(c) Triaging patient needs and directing individuals to appropriate care, offering referrals based on the urgency of health issues;
(d) Provide drug information to healthcare professionals, patients and public;
(e) Participate in health-promotion programmes to raise awareness;
(f) Collaborating with healthcare providers to foster comprehensive, patient-centered care within a community-based primary healthcare system.

5.4 Community Dispensing Services

Terminology	Definition
Community Dispensing Services 社區配藥服務	The legal supply of medicines, including over-the-counter and prescription medications, as well as health supplies by community pharmacists. The dispensing service includes assessment, consultation, as well as provision of health information and advice to enable the safe and effective use of medications by patients and caregivers.
High-Alert Medication 高警訊藥物	Drugs that bear a heightened risk of causing significant patient harm when they are used in error in patient care process. Although mistakes may or may not be more common with these drugs, the consequences of an error are clearly more devastating to patients. (3) Remarks: Although the terms "high alert medication" and "high risk medication" sometimes are used interchangeably (4), source of errors of high-alert medications may be more associated with healthcare providers during the process of prescribing, storage, preparation and administration of medications.

| | The scope of high alert medications may be overlapped with high risk medications. |

5.5 Self-Care and Minor Ailment Service

Terminology	Definition
Self-Care 自我護理	The ability of individuals, families and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a healthcare professional. (5)
Minor Ailment Service 輕微疾病管理 (小病小痛管理服務)	Abbreviation: MAS A community pharmacy service where pharmacists provide assessment, treatment recommendations, and self-care guidance for common, self-limiting health conditions that can be reasonably self-diagnosed and self-managed using over-the-counter medications.
Over-The-Counter Medications 非處方藥物/成藥	Abbreviation: OTC Medications Medicines that can be obtained without a prescription, including medicines to be dispensed with or without the supervision of a pharmacist.(6-9)

5.6 Medication Management Services

Terminology	Definition
Medication Management Services 藥物管理服務	Abbreviation: MMS A spectrum of patient-centered, pharmacist provided, collaborative services that focus on medication appropriateness, effectiveness, safety, and adherence with the goal of improving health outcomes.(10) Encompass a variety of terms, such as Medication Therapy Management (MTM), Comprehensive Medication Management (CMM), Collaborative Medication Management etc.
Medication Assessment 用藥評估	Assess each medication for its appropriateness, effectiveness, safety and patient adherence.(11)
Medication Review 藥物評估	A structured evaluation of a patient's medicines with the aim of optimizing medicine use and improving health

	outcomes. This entails detecting drug-related problems and recommending interventions.(12)
Medication Reconciliation 用藥整合	The formal process in which health care professionals' partner with patients to ensure accurate and complete medication information transfer at interfaces of care. Medication reconciliation at admission involves using a systematic process to obtain a Best Possible Medication History (BPMH) which reflects an accurate and complete list of all medications taken prior to admission. The BPMH is then used to create admission medication orders, or is compared to admission medication orders in order to identify and resolve any discrepancies. At the end of each episode of care the verified information is transferred to the next care provider and provided to the patient and or family. The process is designed to prevent potential medication errors and adverse events.(13)
Best Possible Medication History 最完善的用藥歷史	Abbreviation: BPMH A medication history obtained by a healthcare professional which includes a thorough history of all regular medication use (prescribed and non-prescribed), using a number of different sources of information. Types of medication to be noted on the BPMH include: all prescribed, non-prescribed, non-prescription, recreational and as needed medications.(13)
Polypharmacy 多重用藥	The concurrent use of multiple medications. Although there is no standard definition, polypharmacy is often defined as the routine use of five or more medications. This includes over-the-counter, prescription and/or traditional and complementary medicines used by a patient.(14)
Potentially Inappropriate Medication 潛在性不適當用藥	Abbreviation: PIM A potentially inappropriate medication is a drug for which the risk of an adverse event outweighs the potential benefit, particularly when there is a safer or more effective alternative therapy available for the same condition.(15) To help healthcare providers identify and avoid prescribing PIMs, the American Geriatrics Society

	publishes the Beers Criteria for Potentially Inappropriate Medication Use in Older Adults, which is a widely recognized and evidence-based list of medications that should be avoided or used with caution in older patients.
Drug Related Problem 用藥問題 /藥物相關問題	Abbreviation: DRP An event or circumstance involving drug therapy that actually or potentially interferes with desired health outcomes.(16) Remark: Adopted from the framework established by Pharmaceutical Care Network Europe (PCNE). Drug related problems may be more directly attributed to the medical care processes.
Medication Therapy Problem 藥物治療問題	Abbreviation: MTP A medication therapy problem exists when the use, misuse, or non-use of a specific medication results in a less-than-optimal clinical outcome for a patient.(17) Remark: Adopted from the framework established by Pharmacy Quality Alliance (PQA). This framework has been adopted in the United States for comprehensive medication management service in outpatient setting.(18)
Adherence 依從性/依順性	The extent to which a person's behavior – taking medication, following a diet, and/or executing lifestyle changes, corresponds with agreed recommendations from a healthcare provider.(19)
Medication Adherence 服藥依從性/依順性	Adherence to medication is defined as the extent to which the patient's action matches the agreed recommendations.(20) It involves the shared decision process between patients and healthcare providers.
Medication Discrepancy 用藥差異/不一致	Any difference between the medications a patient is taking and what has been documented in the patient's medical record or on the medication list. Common discrepancies include: (21) • Omission - a medication the patient is currently taking is not listed

	• Commission - a medication is listed but patient is not currently taking • Different dose, route, or frequency is listed of a medication that the patient is taking • Therapy lacking indication • Therapeutic duplication
High Risk Medication 高風險藥物	Refers to drugs that bears a heightened risk of causing significant harm when they are used in error. Although mistakes may or may not be more common with these medications, the consequences of an error are clearly more devastating to patients.(4) Remark: Although the terms "high alert medication" and "high risk medication" sometimes are used interchangeably (4), the source of errors of high risk medications may be more associated with patient-related factors, such as side effects arose from non-adherence to prescribed medications. The scope of high alert medications may be overlapped with high risk medications.
Adverse Drug Event 藥物不良事件	Abbreviation: ADE Any untoward medical occurrence in a patient or clinical investigation subject administered a pharmaceutical product and which does not necessarily have to have a causal relationship with this treatment.(22)
Adverse Drug Reaction 藥物不良反應	Abbreviation: ADR A response to a drug which is noxious and unintended and which occurs at doses normally used in man for prophylaxis, diagnosis, or therapy of disease or for modification of physiological function. (22)
Side Effect 副作用	An expected and known effect of a drug that is not the intended therapeutic outcome.(23)
Interaction 相互作用	A drug interaction occurs when a patient's response to a drug is modified by food, nutritional supplements, formulation excipients, environmental factors, other drugs or disease. (24)

6. References

1.   Knowledge Exchange Office. The University of Hong Kong. HKU KE Strategy - Making a Positive Impact on Society through Knowledge Exchange

[Available from: https://www.ke.hku.hk/about-ke/hku-ke-strategy.

2.   Health Bureau The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. Primary Healthcare Blueprint. 2022.

3.   Institute for Safe Medication Practices. ISMP List of High-Alert Medications in Community/Ambulatory Care Settings. 2021.

4.   World Health Organization. Medication safety in high-risk situations. 2019.

5.   World Health Organization. WHO guideline on self-care interventions for health and well-being, 2022 revision. 2022.

6.   U.S. Food & Drug Administration. Understanding Over-the-Counter Medicines 2018 [Available from: https://www.fda.gov/drugs/buying-using-medicine-safely/understanding-over-counter-medicines.

7.   Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency. Medicines: reclassify your produc. 2024.

8.   Therapeutic Goods Administration. Over the counter (OTC) medicines [Available from: https://www.tga.gov.au/products/non-prescription-medicines/over-counter-otc-medicines.

9.   Health Canada. Regulation of non-prescription drugs 2022 [Available from: https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/self-care-regulation-non-prescription-drugs.html.

10.   Joint Commission of Pharmacy Practitioners. Medication Management Services (MMS) Definition and Key Points. 2018.

11.   Joint Commission of Pharmacy Practitioners. Pharmacists' Patient Care Process. 2014 [updated May 29, 2014. Available from: https://jcpp.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/PatientCareProcess-with-supporting-organizations.pdf.

12.   Nina Griese-Mammen KEH, Markus Messerli, Saija Leikola, Nejc Horvat, J W Foppe van Mil, Mitja Kos,. PCNE definition of medication review: reaching agreement. International Journa of Clinical Pharmacy. 2018;40:1199-208.

13.   World Health Organization. High5s implementation guide: medication reconciliation. 2014.

14.   World Health Organization. Medication Safety in Polypharmacy. 2019.

15.   American Geriatrics Society. American Geriatrics Society Updated Beers Criteria® for Potentially Inappropriate Medication Use in Older Adults. Journal of American Geriatrics Society. 2023;71:2052-81.

16.   Pharmaceutical Care Network Europe Association. PCNE Classification for Drug-Related Problems V9.1. 2020.

17.   Pharmacy Quality Alliance. Medication Therapy Problem (MTP) Documentation Tool: Guidance Document 2019.

18.   CMM in Primary Care Research Team. The Patient Care Process for Delivering Comprehensive Medication Management (CMM): Optimizing Medication Use in Patient-Centered, Team-Based Care Settings. 2018.

19.   World Health Organization. Adherence to long-term therapies : evidence for action. . 2003.

20.   National Institute or Health and Care Excellence. Medicines adherence: involving patients in decisions about prescribed medicines and supporting adherence 2009.

21.   American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. Medication Reconciliation Guidance Document for Pharmacists 2018.

22.   International Conference On Harmonisation Of Technical Requirements For Registration Of Pharmaceuticals For Human Use. Clinical Safety Data Management: Definitions And Standards For Expedited Reporting E2a. 1994.

23.   VA Center for Medication Safety And VHA Pharmacy Benefits Management Strategic Healthcare Group and the Medical Advisory Pane. Adverse Drug Events, Adverse Drug Reactions and Medication Errors Frequently Asked Questions 2006.

24.   Drug interactions: principles and practice,. Australian Prescriber,. 2012;35(3).