



**MedDRA**  
Medical Dictionary  
for Regulatory Activities

# Advanced MedDRA Coding




ICH  
harmonisation for better health 1



**MedDRA**

MedDRA was developed under the auspices of the International Council for Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Pharmaceuticals for Human Use (ICH). The activities of the MedDRA Maintenance and Support Services Organization (MSSO) are overseen by an ICH MedDRA Management Committee, which is composed of the ICH parties, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) of the UK, Health Canada, and the WHO (as Observer).



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## Course Overview

- Discuss advanced principles in the **MedDRA Term Selection: Points to Consider (MTS:PTC)** document
- Discuss MedDRA Concept Descriptions
- Show several examples of proper coding of advanced principles
- Use browser and polling application to test your understanding of advanced coding principles
- Present some MedDRA coding "pearls"
- Conclude with a question and answer session

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## MedDRA Term Selection: Points to Consider Document

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## MedDRA Term Selection: Points to Consider (MTS:PTC)

### **MedDRA® TERM SELECTION: POINTS TO CONSIDER**

**ICH-Endorsed Guide for MedDRA Users**

**Release 4.22**

**March 2022**

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- Provides term selection advice for industry and regulatory purposes
- Objective is to promote accurate and consistent term selection to facilitate common understanding of shared data
- Recommended to be used as basis for individual organization's own coding conventions

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## MedDRA Term Selection: PTC (cont)

- Developed by a working group of the ICH Management Committee
- Updated annually in March
- Complete versions available in
  - English, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, and Russian
- Condensed versions available for other MedDRA languages
- Available on MedDRA and JMO websites



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## Term Selection Points

### Section 3

- Diagnoses and Provisional Diagnoses with or without Signs and Symptoms
- Death and Other Patient Outcomes
- Suicide and Self-Harm
- Conflicting/Ambiguous/Vague Information
- Combination Terms
- Age vs. Event Specificity
- Body Site vs. Event Specificity
- Location-Specific vs. Microorganism-Specific Infection
- Modification of Pre-existing Conditions
- Exposures During Pregnancy and Breast Feeding
- Congenital Terms
- Neoplasms
- Medical and Surgical Procedures
- Investigations

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## Term Selection Points

### Section 3

- Medication Errors, Accidental Exposures and Occupational Exposures
- Misuse, Abuse and Addiction
- Transmission of Infectious Agent via Product
- Overdose, Toxicity and Poisoning
- Device-related Terms
- Drug Interactions
- No Adverse Effect and "Normal" Terms
- Unexpected Therapeutic Effect
- Modification of Effect
- Social Circumstances
- Medical and Social History
- Indication for Product Use
- Off Label Use
- Product Quality Issues

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## General Principles



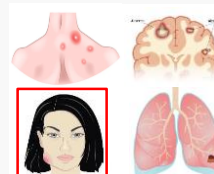
- Always Select a Lowest Level Term  
Select Only Current LLTs

- ✓ Select the Lowest Level Term that most accurately reflects the reported verbatim information

*"Abscess on face"*

→ Do not simply select LLT *Abscess*

→ Select a term with greater specificity LLT *Facial abscess*



- ✓ Select current LLTs only
  - Non-current terms for legacy conversion/historical purposes

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## General Principles



### • Selecting More Than One Term

- ✓ Can select more than one LLT to represent reported information.
  - Selecting one term may lead to loss of specificity
  - Selecting more than one term may lead to redundant counts



### **Document your procedures!**

Report:  
"Metastatic  
gingival cancer"

Select LLT Gingival cancer **OR** LLT Metastatic carcinoma  
Select LLT Gingival cancer **AND** LLT Metastatic carcinoma

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## General Principles



### • Check the Hierarchy

- ✓ Check the hierarchy above a selected LLT (PT, HLT, HLGT, SOC) to ensure placement accurately reflects meaning of reported term

You need to code a report of "low energy" but don't see an exact match in MedDRA.

You decide to use LLT *Worn out*.

You check the PT above this LLT and see that it is "Fatigue". You are now more comfortable about the LLT you selected.

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## Concept Descriptions

- Descriptions of how a concept is interpreted, used, and classified in MedDRA
- Not a definition
- Intended to aid accurate and consistent use of MedDRA
- Overcome differences in medical practice worldwide
- Accessible in MSSO's browsers

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## Concept Descriptions (cont)

The screenshot displays the MedDRA Browser interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like 'Preferred Language', 'English', 'MedDRA Concept Descriptions', 'Legends', 'About', 'Search History', 'New Browser Window', 'MedDRA Documentation', and 'User G'. Below this, a 'Language and Version Options' section shows 'English' selected for both language and version (19.1). The 'Browser View' is set to 'SOC'. A sidebar on the left lists various SOC categories, including 'Blood and lymphatic disorders', 'Cardiac disorders', 'Congenital, familial and hereditary disorders', 'Ear and labyrinth disorders', 'Endocrine disorders', 'Eye disorders', 'Gastrointestinal disorders', 'General disorders and symptoms', 'Hepatobiliary disorders', 'Immune system disorders', 'Infections and infestations', 'Injury, poisoning and procedural complications', 'Investigations', 'Metabolism and nutrition disorders', 'Musculoskeletal disorders', 'Neoplasms (benign, malignant, and unspecified)', 'Nervous system disorders', 'Pregnancy, puerperium and postnatal disorders', 'Product issues', 'Psychiatric disorders', 'Renal and urinary disorders', and 'Reproductive system and breast disorders'. The main content area is titled 'MedDRA CONCEPT DESCRIPTIONS' and explains that this appendix provides a list of MedDRA concept descriptions, which are descriptions of how a concept is interpreted, used, and classified within the MedDRA terminology, not definitions. It states that these descriptions are intended to aid the consistent and accurate use of MedDRA in coding, retrieval, and analysis, and to overcome differences in medical practice worldwide. The MSSO expects this appendix to be a working document and grow as subscribers request additional concepts to be documented. Below this text is an alphabetical index from A to Z. The letter 'A' is highlighted, and a sub-section titled 'Abuse' is visible, with a description: '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.'

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## Advanced Principles in MedDRA Term Selection: Points to Consider Document

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## Diagnoses and Provisional Diagnoses

SINGLE DIAGNOSIS	
DEFINITIVE DIAGNOSIS	PROVISIONAL DIAGNOSIS
Single diagnosis without signs and symptoms	Single provisional diagnosis without signs and symptoms
•Diagnosis (only possible option)	•Provisional diagnosis (only possible option)
Example: "Myocardial infarction" → select "Myocardial infarction"	Example: "Possible myocardial infarction" → select "Myocardial infarction" (select term as if definitive diagnosis)

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Similar principles apply for multiple diagnoses

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## Diagnoses and Provisional Diagnoses (cont)

SINGLE DIAGNOSIS	
DEFINITIVE DIAGNOSIS	PROVISIONAL DIAGNOSIS
Single diagnosis with signs/symptoms	Single provisional diagnosis with signs/symptoms
•Preferred: Diagnosis only	•Preferred: Provisional diagnosis and signs/symptoms
Example: "Anaphylactic reaction with rash, dyspnoea, hypotension, and laryngospasm" → select "Anaphylactic reaction"	Example: "Possible myocardial infarction with chest pain, dyspnoea, diaphoresis" → select "Myocardial infarction", "Chest pain", "Dyspnoea", and "Diaphoresis"

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Similar principles apply for multiple diagnoses

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## Diagnoses and Provisional Diagnoses (cont)

SINGLE DIAGNOSIS	
DEFINITIVE DIAGNOSIS	PROVISIONAL DIAGNOSIS
Single diagnosis with signs/symptoms	Single provisional diagnosis with signs/symptoms
•Alternate: Diagnosis and signs/symptoms	•Alternate: Signs/symptoms only (as provisional diagnosis may change)
Example: "Anaphylactic reaction with rash, dyspnoea, hypotension, and laryngospasm" → select "Anaphylactic reaction", "Rash", "Dyspnoea", "Hypotension", and "Laryngospasm"	Example: "Possible myocardial infarction with chest pain, dyspnoea, diaphoresis" → select "Chest pain", "Dyspnoea", and "Diaphoresis"

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Similar principles apply for multiple diagnoses

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## Diagnoses and Provisional Diagnoses (cont)

- Always include signs/symptoms not associated with diagnosis

Reported	LLT Selected
Myocardial infarction, chest pain, dyspnoea, diaphoresis, ECG changes and jaundice	Myocardial infarction Jaundice (note that jaundice is not typically associated with myocardial infarction)

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## What Terms to Select?

- Sepsis leading to shock from possible spontaneous bacterial peritonitis or bowel perforation

Sepsis

Shock

Septic shock

Spontaneous bacterial peritonitis

Bowel perforation

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## Conflicting/Ambiguous Information

- First, try to obtain more specific information

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Hyperkalaemia with a serum potassium of 1.6 mEq/L	Serum potassium abnormal	LLT <i>Serum potassium abnormal</i> covers both of the reported concepts (note: serum potassium of 1.6 mEq/L is a low result, not high)
GU pain	Pain	"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 <i>Pain</i>

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## Vague Information

- First, try to obtain more specific information

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)
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 <i>Ill-defined disorder</i> can be selected

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## What Terms to Select?

- Clinical complication of IUD

IUD complication (PT Complication associated with device)

Intra-uterine death (PT Foetal death)

Unevaluable event

- Hypoglycemia (blood glucose = 200 mg/dL)

Blood glucose abnormal

Blood glucose increased

Hypoglycemia

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## Investigations

- Medical condition vs. investigation result

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Hypoglycaemia	Hypoglycaemia	LLT <i>Hypoglycaemia</i> links to SOC <i>Metabolism and nutrition disorders</i>
Decreased glucose	Glucose decreased	LLT <i>Glucose decreased</i> links to SOC <i>Investigations</i>

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## Investigations (cont)

- Unambiguous investigation result

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

- Ambiguous investigation result

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
His glucose was 40	Glucose abnormal	No units have been reported. Select LLT <i>Glucose abnormal</i> if clarification cannot be obtained.

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## Investigations (cont)

- Investigation results consistent with diagnosis

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

- Grouped investigation result terms

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Increased alkaline phosphatase, increased SGPT, increased SGOT and elevated LDH	Alkaline phosphatase increased SGPT increased SGOT increased LDH increased	Select four individual terms. A single term such as LLT <i>Liver function tests abnormal</i> should not be selected.

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## What Terms to Select?

- Testing showed increased serum creatinine and BUN, with increased BUN/creatinine ratio

Increased serum creatinine

BUN increased

Blood urea nitrogen/creatinine ratio increased

Renal function tests NOS abnormal

- Patient had features of aldosterone excess

Aldosterone increased

Aldosteronism

Blood aldosterone abnormal

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## Combination Terms

- One condition is more specific than the other

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

- A MedDRA combination term is available

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

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## Combination Terms (cont)

- If splitting provides more clinical information, select more than one term
- In all cases of combination terms, apply medical judgment

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

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## What Terms to Select?

- Retinal disease from HIV with near total blindness (R and L)

Retinal damage

Retinal disorder

HIV disease

Blindness

HIV retinopathy

Blindness, both eyes

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## Medication Errors



- See MedDRA Concept Descriptions
- Discussed in MedDRA Points to Consider Companion Document – Section 3
  - Detailed examples
  - “Questions and Answers” about medication errors
- “Top-down” navigation in HLGT *Medication errors and other product use errors and issues* is best approach for term selection

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## Medication Errors (cont)

- Medication error with clinical consequences

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Patient was administered wrong drug and experienced hypotension	Wrong drug administered Hypotension	
Insulin 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 <i>LLT Accidental overdose</i> can be selected

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## Medication Errors (cont)

- Medication error without clinical consequences

Reported	LLT Selected	Preferred Option
Medication was given intravenously instead of intramuscularly without any adverse effect	Intramuscular formulation administered by other route	✓
	Intramuscular formulation administered by other route	
	No adverse effect	

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## Medication Errors (cont)

- Important to record potential occurrence of medication error
- Unlikely to be reported as an adverse event but may need to be recorded in periodic safety reports

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Pharmacist notices that the names of two drugs look similar and is concerned that this may result in a medication error	<p>Drug name look-alike</p> <p>Circumstance or information capable of leading to medication error</p>	<p>Note: this example is a potential medication error. LLT <i>Drug name look-alike</i> provides additional information about the nature of the potential medication error, and LLT <i>Circumstance or information capable of leading to medication error</i> indicates that there is a potential medication error.</p>

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## Overdose, Toxicity and Poisoning

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

- Overdose with clinical consequences

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

- Overdose without clinical consequences

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

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## What Term(s) to Select?

- The patient's renal function was measured every six months instead of on the monthly schedule recommended in the label for the drug

Medication monitoring error

Renal function test abnormal

Drug monitoring procedure incorrectly performed

- Unintentionally took more than maximum recommended dose due to dispensing error

Accidental overdose

Incorrect dose administered

Drug dispensing error

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## Death and Other Patient Outcomes

- Death, disability and hospitalization are considered outcomes and not usually coded as adverse events (AE) or adverse reactions (AR)
- If one of these outcomes is the only reported information, select an appropriate LLT for coding
- If a death term in MedDRA adds important clinical information, code it along with reported ARs/AEs

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

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## Drug Interactions

- Term includes reactions between drugs (including biologic products) and other drugs, foods, devices and alcohol
- If reporter states an interaction, select terms for interaction term and reported medical event(s)

Reported	LLT Selected
Patient drank cranberry juice which interacted with anticoagulant drug causing an INR increase	Food interaction INR increased

- If reporter does not specifically state an interaction, select terms for reported medical event(s) only

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## Suicide and Self-Harm

- Coding of suicide attempts, completed suicides and self-harm should be accurate and consistent
- Do not assume that an overdose, even if intentional, is a suicide attempt
- If a self-harm report does not mention suicide or suicide attempt, only code self-injury term
- If a suicide attempt is fatal, select a term that reflects the outcome instead of the attempt

Reported	LLT Selected	Comment
Suicide attempt resulted in death	Completed suicide	Report death as an outcome

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## What Term to Select?

- Death from cerebral hemorrhage

Sudden death

Death

Cerebral hemorrhage

Brain death

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## What Term to Select?

- Patient was found dead

Death from natural causes

Death

Died in sleep

Found dead

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## What Term(s) to Select?

- After taking an antihistamine along with her prescription proton pump inhibitor, a 53-year-old woman developed vertigo

Drug interaction NOS

Vertigo subjective

Vertigo

Drug interaction

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## What Term(s) to Select?

- Deliberately took an overdose

Intentional overdose

Suicide attempt

Deliberate overdose

Overdose NOS

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## Coding Exercises

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## Assessing the Reported Information

- Consider what is being reported. Is it a:
  - Clinical condition - Diagnosis, sign or symptom?
  - Indication?
  - Test result?
  - Injury?
  - Procedure?
  - Medication error?
  - Product use issue?
  - Product quality issue?
  - Social circumstance?
  - Device issue?
  - Procedural complication?

– **Is it a combination of these?**

The type of report will influence the way you search for a suitable LLT. It may indicate in which SOC you expect to find the closest match.

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## Which LLT Would You Select?

Verbatim: "Man with decreased fertility."

- A. Infertility
- B. Fertility decreased male
- C. Infertility male
- D. Fertility decreased

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## Which LLT Would You Select?

Verbatim: "Became color blind in adolescence"

- A. Color blindness
- B. Blindness color
- C. Colour blindness acquired
- D. Color blindness acquired

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## Which LLT Would You Select?

Verbatim: "Turned very greasy"

- A. Ill-defined disorder
- B. Unevaluable event
- C. Skin greasy
- D. Unevaluable reaction

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## Which LLT Would You Select?

Verbatim: "Patient reported medical problem"

- A. Adverse event
- B. Unevaluable event
- C. Unevaluable reaction
- D. Ill-defined disorder

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## Which LLT Would You Select?

Verbatim: "The 2-year-old accidentally took his mother's medication"

- A. Accidental product intake by child
- B. Accidental exposure to product by child
- C. Accidental drug intake by child
- D. Unintended ingestion of product by child

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## Which LLT Would You Select?

Verbatim: "Infection after surgery"

- A. Infection
- B. Postoperative wound infection
- C. Surgical wound infection
- D. Postoperative infection

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## Which LLT Would You Select?

Verbatim: "He sold his father's medication"

- A. Drug diversion
- B. Intentional product misuse
- C. Drug use for unapproved indication
- D. Intentional drug misuse

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## Which LLT Would You Select?

Verbatim: "Had MI"

- A. Myocardial infarction
- B. Mitral incompetence
- C. MI
- D. Unevaluable event

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## Which LLT Would You Select?

Verbatim:

"Hypernatraemia (Serum sodium = 115 mEq/L)"

- A. Serum sodium abnormal
- B. Hypernatraemia
- C. Hyponatraemia
- D. Serum sodium decreased

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## Which LLT Would You Select?

Verbatim: "She accidentally missed the morning dose"

- A. Missed dose
- B. Temporary interruption of therapy
- C. Intentional dose omission
- D. Missed dose in error

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## Which LLT Would You Select?

Verbatim: "The doctor mistakenly prescribed the wrong drug; the pharmacist noticed the error before dispensing the drug"

- A. Wrong drug dispensed
- B. Medication error
- C. Intercepted drug prescribing error
- D. Intercepted drug dispensing error

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## Which LLT(s) Would You Select?

Verbatim: "The patient reported a loss of smell and thought that he might have a COVID-19 infection"

- A. Anosmia
- B. Suspected COVID-19
- C. Loss of smell
- D. COVID-19

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## Which LLT Would You Select?

Verbatim: "Dose taken was below the minimum recommended dose in the product label"

- A. Underdose
- B. Drug administration error
- C. Accidental underdose
- D. Incorrect dosage administered

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## Which LLT(s) Would You Select?

Verbatim: "Because his package of medication contained too much drug, the patient received an overdose of medication and developed severe nausea. He was diagnosed with gastritis"

- A. Product physical issue
- B. Overdose
- C. Nausea
- D. Gastritis
- E. Accidental overdose
- F. Package volume overfill

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## Which LLT Would You Select?

Verbatim: "Abused by her husband"

- A. Physical abuse
- B. Battered wife
- C. Spousal abuse
- D. Victim of spousal abuse

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## Which LLT Would You Select?

Verbatim: "The patient created a false belief that her relatives were stealing from her"

- A. Theft
- B. Stealing
- C. Delusion of theft
- D. Victim of crime

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## Which LLT Would You Select?

Verbatim: "The patient was treated with Drug Z for rosacea, which is an off label use of this medication. Unfortunately, she developed severe dizziness"

What is the preferred option for the LLT(s) to be selected?

- A. Rosacea
- B. Off label use in unapproved indication
- C. Off label use
- D. Dizziness

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## Which LLT Would You Select?

Verbatim: "A 27-year-old woman took a 2-week course of antibiotics during her pregnancy. She did not experience any side effects."

What is the preferred option for the LLT(s) to be selected?

- A. Maternal exposure during pregnancy
- B. No adverse effect
- C. Normal pregnancy

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## Which LLT Would You Select?

Verbatim: "The medication was stored at room temperature instead of in the refrigerator where it belonged."

- A. Incorrect storage of drug
- B. Improper storage of unused product
- C. Intercepted medication error
- D. Product storage error temperature too high

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## Which LLT(s) Would You Select?

Verbatim: "He was given Drug Y to treat a BRAF gene mutation-related colorectal cancer"

- A. Colorectal cancer
- B. Acquired gene mutation
- C. BRAF gene mutation
- D. Colorectal carcinoma

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## Which LLTs Would You Select?

Verbatim: "Because the label on the package was missing the wording on dosing information, the patient took the drug twice daily instead of once daily, resulting in the administration of an overdose."

- A. Product label issue
- B. Product label missing
- C. Product label missing text
- D. Wrong dose administered
- E. Once daily dose taken more frequently
- F. Inappropriate schedule of drug administration
- G. Overdose
- H. Accidental overdose

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## Some MedDRA Coding “Pearls”

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## Remember That MedDRA Can Be Used to Code More Than AEs

### Narrative vignette

A 75-year-old male receiving Drug X for rheumatoid arthritis developed symptomatic aortic valve stenosis. The patient’s medical history is significant for colon cancer and cigarette smoking. He underwent an aortic valve replacement and developed a sternal wound infection three days post-surgery.

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## MedDRA Coding “Pearls”



- First, try using reporter’s actual words
- Be aware of MedDRA’s specificity
- Exploit MedDRA’s hierarchy – if an LLT is close to what you need, look at its “siblings” and “parent”
- Check where the LLT lies in MedDRA (i.e., check the hierarchy above to be sure it represents the verbatim term accurately)

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## MedDRA Coding “Pearls” (cont)



- Use “top-down” and “bottom-up” navigation
- Use available resources for difficult verbatim terms (web search, medical dictionaries, colleagues)
- Use advanced Boolean search terms features (i.e., “begins with”, “exact match”, “ends with”, “not contains”, “and”, “or”) when needed
- Become familiar with MedDRA Concept Descriptions

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## MedDRA Coding “Pearls” (cont)



And most important of all... get more coding training!

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## Summary

- ✓ Discussed important advanced principles presented in the MTS:PTC Document
- ✓ Discussed MedDRA Concept Descriptions
- ✓ Showed examples of coding of advanced principles
- ✓ Used browser and polling application to test your understanding of advanced coding principles
- ✓ Presented some MedDRA coding “pearls”

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## MSSO Contacts

- Website
  - [www.meddra.org](http://www.meddra.org)
- Email
  - [mssohelp@meddra.org](mailto:mssohelp@meddra.org)
- Frequently Asked Questions
  - [www.meddra.org/faq](http://www.meddra.org/faq)
- MedDRA Browsers
  - <https://www.meddra.org/meddra-desktop-browsers> (Desktop Browser)
  - <https://tools.meddra.org/wbb/> (Web-Based Browser)
  - <https://mmb.meddra.org> (Mobile Browser)

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## MSSO Contacts (cont)

- Change Request Submission
  - <https://www.meddra.org/how-to-use/change-requests>
- Training Schedule
  - <https://www.meddra.org/training/schedule>
- MedDRA Support Documentation
  - <https://www.meddra.org/how-to-use/support-documentation>

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Question and Answer Session



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