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**Traditional Chinese medicine —  
Vocabulary for diagnostics —**

**Part 2:  
Pulse**

*Médecine traditionnelle chinoise — Vocabulaire pour les  
diagnostics —  
Partie 2: Pouls*

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# Contents

Page

<b>Foreword</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>1 Scope</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2 Normative references</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>3 Terms and definitions</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>4 Terms relating to the methods of pulse diagnosis</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>5 Terms relating to the key elements of pulse</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>6 Terms relating to pulse condition</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Annex A (informative) Pulse diagnosis terms — Chinese, Japanese and Korean characters</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>20</b>

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 249, *Traditional Chinese medicine*.

A list of all parts in the ISO 23961 series can be found on the ISO website.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

Traditional Chinese medicine has become increasingly popular all over the world. Traditional Chinese medicine education has developed rapidly. Traditional Chinese medicine has obtained legal status in the United States, Singapore, Australia, Thailand and other countries and regions. Academic activities of traditional Chinese medicine are increasingly active. International communication of traditional Chinese medicine and medical activities, scientific research, management rules and regulations are in urgent need of International Standards.

First, standardized terminology is essential to standardize products and services. Pulse diagnosis is one of the most distinctive traditional Chinese medicine diagnostic methods. At present, the international trade of pulse-equipment-related products is in great demand in the international market. This document aims to encourage improvement of the pulse-equipment-related industrial and research fields. All traditional Chinese medicine pulse diagnostic instruments can use the same vocabulary, which is very important for international trade and communication. With standardized terminology, the versatility of pulse-equipment-related products or services can be improved to benefit international technical cooperation.

Second, the use of standardized terminology in diagnosis helps to avoid confusion among researchers in the field of pulse diagnosis. But more importantly, the use of standardized terminology in pulse diagnosis also helps manufacturers to deliver a standardized meaning of TCM pulse obtained by pulse-related diagnostic medical devices. Considering the close association between the traditional Chinese medicine diagnosis and diagnostic medical devices, the importance of standardizing diagnostic terminology is clear.

Third, the purpose of the project is for the use of traditional Chinese medicine diagnostic instruments and artificial intelligence (AI) medicine. As internet-based medicine is developing very quickly, a standardized terminology is not only important for computerized information but also necessary for successful communication between physicians and patients from different countries. With advances in AI, medical AI doctors also need standardized terminology.

Therefore, it is necessary to standardize pulse diagnostic terminology as quickly as possible, in order to bring benefits to scholars, governments and enterprises worldwide.

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# Traditional Chinese medicine — Vocabulary for diagnostics —

## Part 2: Pulse

### 1 Scope

This document specifies the basic terminology of pulse diagnostic methods, the key elements of pulse and pulse condition. Each term of pulse diagnosis includes the English name, the classical Chinese characters and its definition.

### 2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

### 3 Terms and definitions

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

#### 3.1

##### **Cun-kou**

medial aspect of the styloid process of the radius where the radial artery pulsates

#### 3.2

##### **pulse diagnosis**

examination of the pulse in Cun-kou for making diagnosis

#### 3.3

##### **guan/bar**

medial side of the styloid process

Note 1 to entry: See [Figure 1](#).

#### 3.4

##### **cun/inch**

carpet end of guan

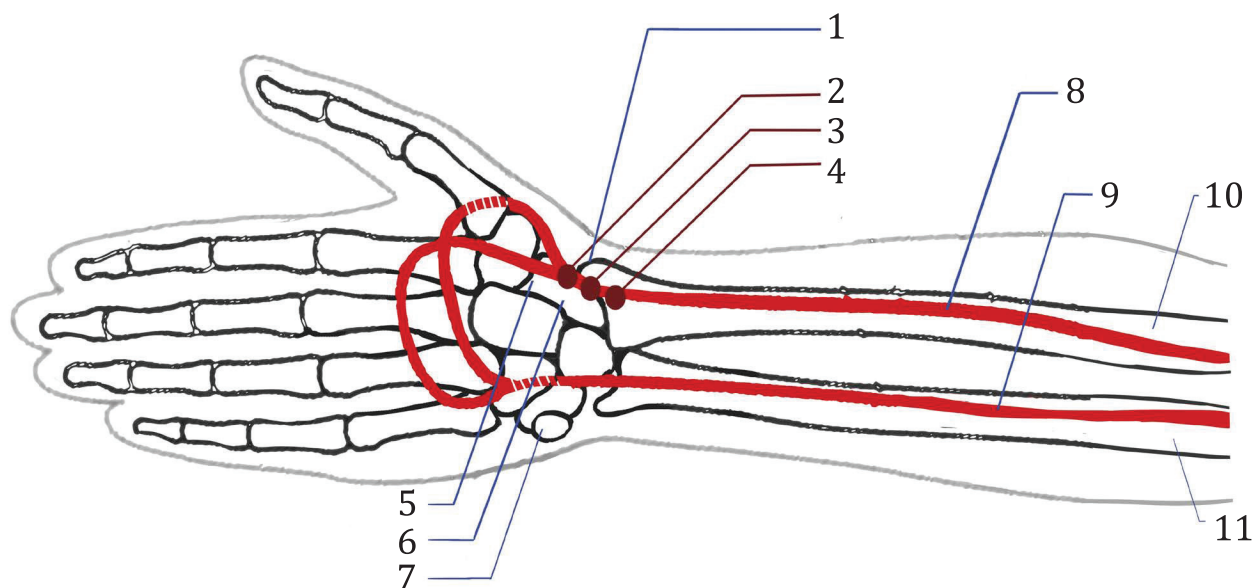
Note 1 to entry: See [Figure 1](#).

#### 3.5

##### **chi/cubit**

cubital end of guan

Note 1 to entry: See [Figure 1](#).



#### Key

- 1 styloid process of radius
- 2 cun/inch
- 3 guan/bar
- 4 chi/cubit
- 5 scap
- 6 bifur
- 7 pisit
- 8 radial artery
- 9 ulnar artery
- 10 radius
- 11 ulna

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**Figure 1 — Location of cun/inch, guan/bar and chi/cubit for pulse diagnosis**

## 4 Terms relating to the methods of pulse diagnosis

### 4.1 arrangement of fingers

布指

three fingers being arched with the same level of finger tips, and the physicians feeling the pulsation with crossing area of the finger tips and bulbs

Note 1 to entry: The spacing of the three fingers can be proportionate to the patient's height. The fingers are spaced apart for a tall patient whereas they should be kept close together for a short patient.

Note 2 to entry: For further information, see [A.1.1](#).



**4.2****individual-finger palpation**

單按

placement of one specific finger at one position to examine the state that the region represents

Note 1 to entry: For further information, see [A.1.2](#).

**4.3****simultaneous palpation with three fingers**

總按

placement of the three fingertips simultaneously on three points with the same strength to examine the overall pulse condition of the three points

Note 1 to entry: For further information, see [A.1.3](#).

**4.4****lifting****light pulse feeling****superficial pulse feeling**

舉

gently touching the skin

Note 1 to entry: For further information, see [A.1.4](#).

**4.5****pressing****heavy pulse feeling****deep pulse feeling**

按

exerting strong finger power to reach the bones

Note 1 to entry: For further information, see [A.1.5](#).

**4.6****searching**

尋

gradually increasing finger power and searching the most palpable pulsation from left to right, back and forth, around the cun/inch, guan/bar and chi/cubit at Cun-kou

Note 1 to entry: For further information, see [A.1.6](#).

**5 Terms relating to the key elements of pulse****5.1****pulse location**

脈位

location of pulse beating

Note 1 to entry: Can be superficial or deep, for example with a floating pulse or a sunken pulse.

Note 2 to entry: For further information, see [A.2.1](#).

**5.2****pulse rate**

至數

frequency of pulse beating

Note 1 to entry: Can be slow or rapid, for example with a slow pulse or a rapid pulse.

Note 2 to entry: For further information, see [A.2.2](#).

### 5.3 pulse length

脈長

axial length of the pulse beating

Note 1 to entry: Can be short or long, for example with a short pulse or a long pulse.

Note 2 to entry: For further information, see [A.2.3](#).

### 5.4 pulse strength

脈力

force of pulse beating

Note 1 to entry: Can be forceless or forceful, for example with a vacuous pulse or a replete pulse.

Note 2 to entry: For further information, see [A.2.4](#).

### 5.5 pulse width

脈寬

radial breadth of pulse beating relating to the thickness or thinness of beats

Note 1 to entry: Can be small or large, for example with a surging pulse or a fine pulse.

Note 2 to entry: For further information, see [A.2.5](#).

### 5.6 pulse smoothness

流暢度

smoothness of approaching pulse beating

Note 1 to entry: Can be smooth or rough, for example with a slippery pulse or a rough pulse.

Note 2 to entry: For further information, see [A.2.6](#).

### 5.7 pulse tension

緊張度

tightness of the vessel of pulse beating

Note 1 to entry: Can be tight or relaxed, for example with a tight pulse or a relaxed pulse.

Note 2 to entry: For further information, see [A.2.7](#).

### 5.8 pulse evenness

均勻度

regularity of pulse beating

Note 1 to entry: Can be irregular or even of rhythm and strength, such as with a racing pulse, a bound pulse or an intermittent pulse.

Note 2 to entry: For further information, see [A.2.8](#).

### 5.9 classification of the key elements of pulse

key elements of pulse being divided into different levels

Note 1 to entry: For the classification structure of the key elements of pulse, see [Figure 2](#).