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

**Part 2:
Pulse**

*Médecine traditionnelle chinoise — Vocabulaire pour les
diagnostics —*

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Published in Switzerland

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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).

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).

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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.

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.

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/>
<https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/70129e63-99b4-4c7e-9e87-cf7b56c3d354/iso-23961-2-2021>

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

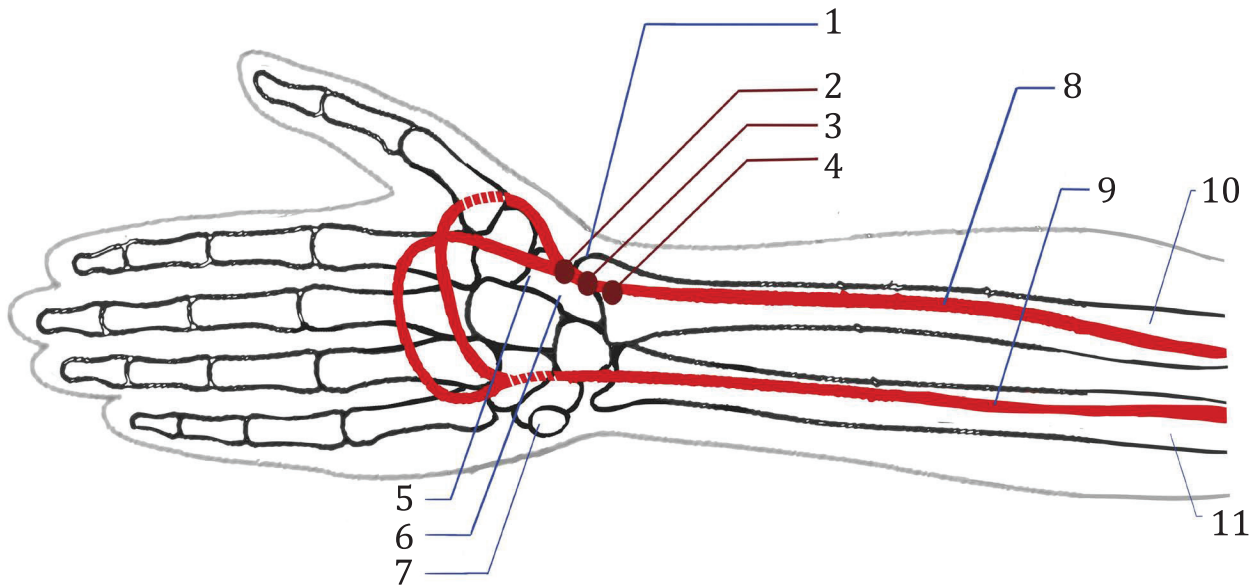
Note 1 to entry: See [Figure 1](#).

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](#).
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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](#).

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Note 2 to entry: Pulse conditions being generally discussed in eight key elements: location, rate, length, width, strength, smoothness, tension and evenness. The varieties of pulse condition can occur as a result of a combination of degree changes of the above eight aspects. Some pulses involve single element, such as a superficial or deep pulse (location). Some involve multiple factors, for example a weak pulse is mixture of deep (location), thread (width) and deficient (strength) quality.

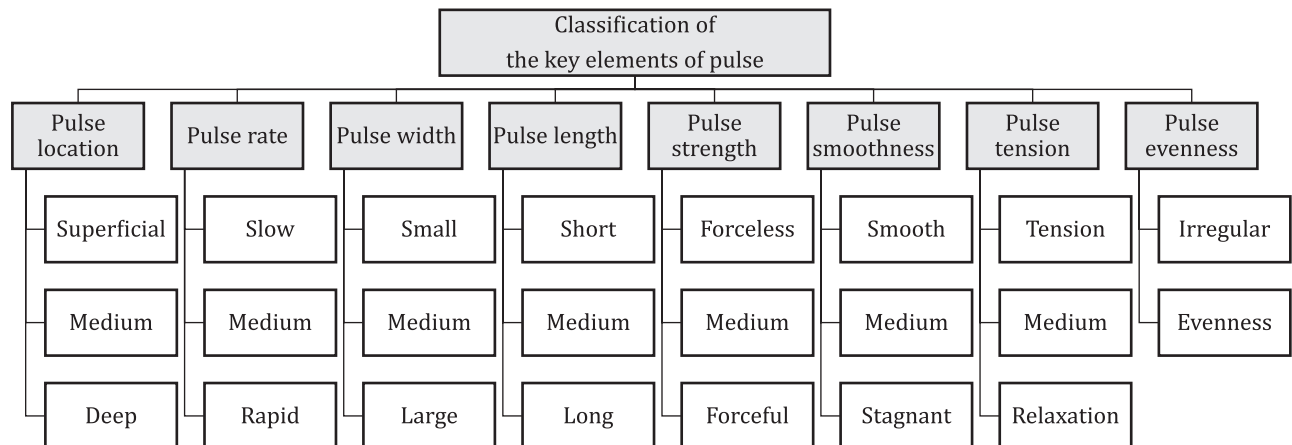


Figure 2 — The classification structure of the key elements of pulse

6 Terms relating to pulse condition

6.1

bound pulse

結脈

pulse with slow and irregular pulse rate

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Note 1 to entry: The first origin is (*Huangdi's Internal Classic*) (《黃帝內經》).

Note 2 to entry: *Classic of Difficult Issues* (《難經》) states, "A bound pulse has occasional stops and the stops have no definite pattern". *Treatise on Cold Damage* (《傷寒論》) states, "The pulse that arrives unhurriedly, occasionally stops and then is restored is called irregularly intermittent pulse" (Chapter *Bianmaifadiyi*, 辨脈法第一). *Pulse Classic* (《脈經》) states, "A bound pulse arrives and departs unhurriedly and there is one stop before the normal pulse beating is restored," (Volume 1), which was cited by *Binhu's Sphygmology* (《瀕湖脈學》).

Note 3 to entry: For further information, see [A.3.1](#).

6.2

dissipated pulse

散脈

pulse which is superficial, irregularly chaotic with light pressure and impalpable with heavy pressure

Note 1 to entry: The first origin is (*Huangdi's Internal Classic*).

Note 2 to entry: *Pulse Classic* states, "A dissipated pulse is large and scattered" (Volume 2), which was cited by *Binhu's Sphygmology* and states, "A dissipated has an irregular pulse rate". *Essential Principles and Practice of Pulse Diagnosis* (《診家正眼》) states, "A scattered pulse is floating and scattered, present in the exterior, not in the interior, gradually becoming empty at the moderate level and completely expiring with pressure" (Volume 2).

Note 3 to entry: For further information, see [A.3.2](#).