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**Traditional Chinese medicine —  
Categorical structure for disorders**

*Médecine traditionnelle chinoise — Structure catégorielle des troubles*

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## Foreword

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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)).

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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](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

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

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

The standardization of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) has been carried out for herbs, acupuncture and moxibustion, among other things. However, disease terminology in TCM has not yet been standardized, nor has how to standardize the classification of diseases been discussed.

The terminology of diseases is essential knowledge in medicine for understanding and describing a disease. In TCM, terms for diseases are based on Han Chinese characters. It is necessary to develop standards and structural categories of terms because there are several ways to express a disease when translating terms from Han Chinese characters to English.

This document offers various benefits to the TCM industry. Above all, it provides guidance for the standardization of disorder terms. It also suggests a way to refine these terms through semantic links between categories, which can eventually be used as a primary database for clinical decision support systems.

The potential uses for this document include:

- support for developers in providing new terminological systems concerning disorder representation in TCM;
- facilitating the representation of TCM disorders using a standardized core model in a manner suitable for computer processing;
- facilitating the mapping and improving semantic correspondence between different terminologies by proposing a core specification for TCM disorder;
- providing a tool for disorder text mining, database construction and ancient document processing over a wide area of TCM.

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# Traditional Chinese medicine — Categorical structure for disorders

## 1 Scope

This document aims to specify a categorical structure in the field of disorder representation in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) by defining a set of domain constraints for use within terminological resources. It contains a concept detailing the domains of four subcategories: body parts, causative agents, pathological process and manifestation.

This document does not include:

- a comprehensive categorical structure for TCM;
- a treatment procedure for TCM;
- relevant devices;
- terms or descriptions for subcategories of body parts, causative agents, pathological process or manifestation.

## 2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

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

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

### 3.1 disorder

illness that disrupts normal physical or mental functions

### 3.2 classification

exhaustive set of mutually exclusive categories to aggregate data at a pre-prescribed level of specialization for a specific purpose

### 3.3 category

type of entity shared by all the individual instances in existence in the past, present and future

Note 1 to entry: Body part (4.1), causative agent (4.2), pathological process (4.3), manifestation (4.4).

### 3.4 categorial structure

minimal set of *categories* (3.3) and the valid relationships between them for representing *disorders* (3.1) in terminological systems for a specified subject field

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

### 3.5

#### **semantic link**

formal representation of a directed associative relation or partitive relation between *disorder* (3.1) and *category* (3.3)

## 4 Characterized categories

### 4.1 Body part

Body part is the category for any anatomical and virtual part of human structure.

EXAMPLES Viscera and bowels (liver, heart, pancreas, lung, kidney, pericardium, gallbladder, small intestine, stomach, large intestine, bladder and triple energizers), meridian and collateral.

### 4.2 Causative agent

Causative agent is the category for the effective or operating element that produces or is capable of producing disorder.

EXAMPLES Viscera six excess (wind, cold, summer heat, dampness, dryness, fire and heat) and seven emotions (joy, anger, anxiety, thought, sorrow, fear and fright.).

### 4.3 Pathological process

Pathological process is the category for the organic process occurring as a consequence of the disorder.

### 4.4 Manifestation

Manifestation is the category for a sign that something exists or is happening.

## 5 Semantic links for disorder terms in TCM

### 5.1 Occurs in

"Occurs in" is a semantic link between the *disorder* (3.1) and the *body part* (4.1).

EXAMPLE "Headache" occurs in the head. See [Annex A, Figure A.1](#).

### 5.2 Has causative agent of

"Has causative agent of" is a semantic link between the *disorder* (3.1) and the *causative agent* (4.2).

EXAMPLE "Cold chest pain" has causative agent of cold. See [Annex A, Figure A.2](#).

### 5.3 Has pathological process of

"Has pathological process of" is a semantic link between the *disorder* (3.1) and the *pathological process* (4.3).

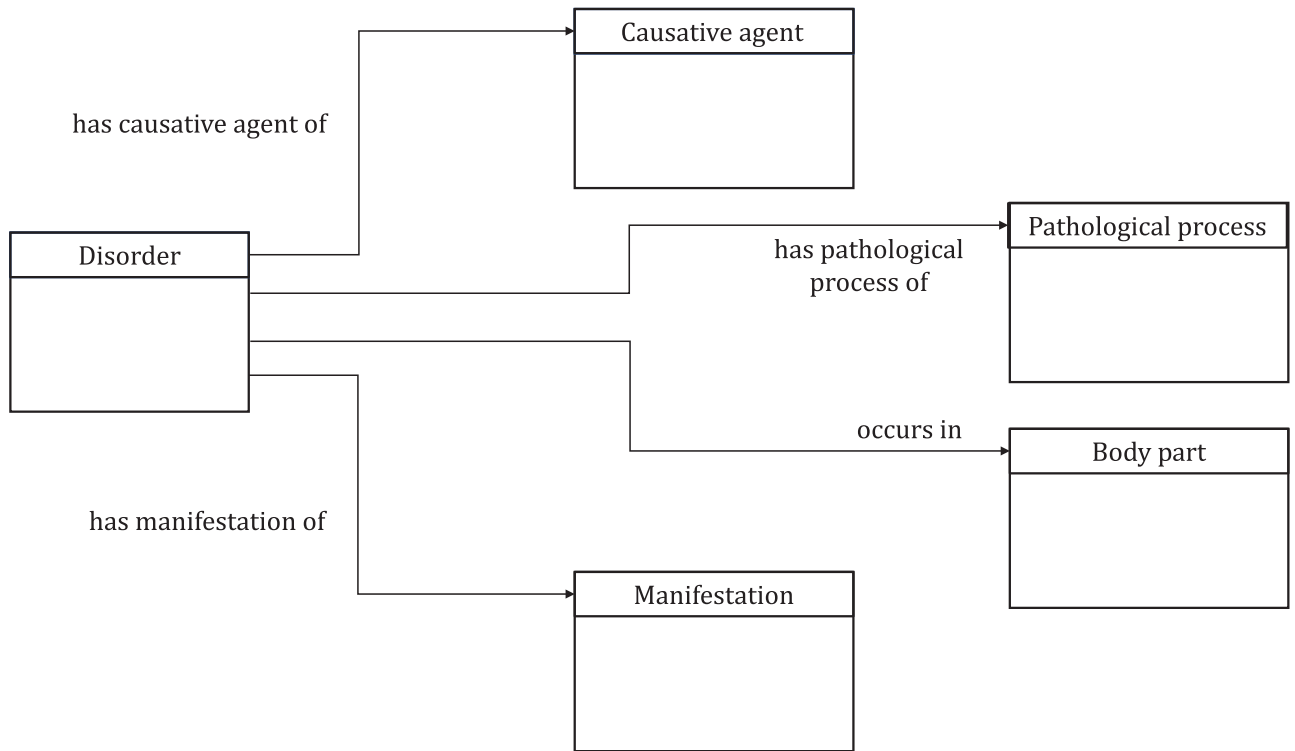
EXAMPLE "Food accumulation lower-back pain" has pathological process of accumulation. See [Annex A, Figure A.3](#).

### 5.4 Has manifestation of

"Has manifestation of" is a semantic link between the *disorder* (3.1) and the *manifestation* (4.4).

EXAMPLE "Food accumulation lower-back pain" has manifestation of pain. See [Annex A, Figure A.3](#).





**Figure 1 — Link of categorial structure for disorders in TCM**  
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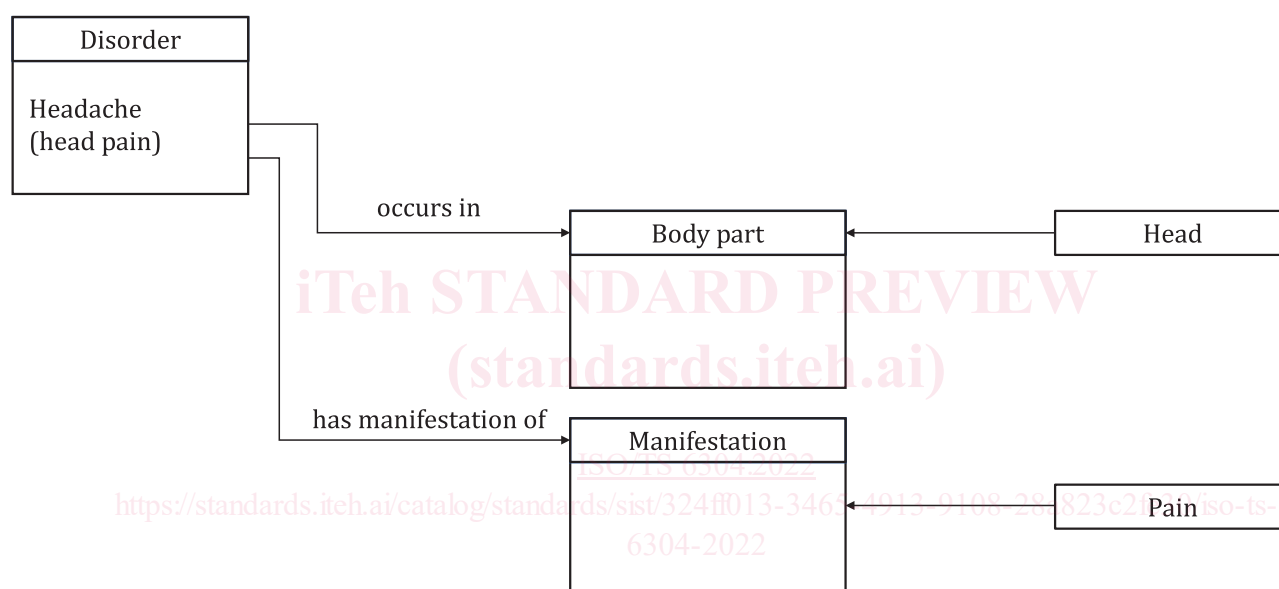
## Annex A (informative)

### Diagram of categorial structure for disorders

#### A.1 Diagram of categorial structure for disorders

##### A.1.1 Headache (head pain)

Headache occurs in the head by an unknown causative agent with pain. See [Figure A.1](#).



**Figure A.1 — Link of categorial structure for disorders: headache**

##### A.1.2 Cold chest pain

Cold chest pain occurs in the chest by cold with pain. See [Figure A.2](#).