NEAL COOK
ANDREA SHEPHERD

OVER 2000 ESSENTIAL TERMS AND THEIR PRONUNCIATION

THE NURSE'S ANATOMY, PHYSIOLOGY AND PATHOPHYSIOLOGY GLOSSARY

2ND EDITION

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SAGE Publications Asia-Pacific Pte Ltd
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Editorial assistant: Sahar Jamfar
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CONTENTS

About the Authors v
Publisher's Acknowledgements vii
Introduction ix

Part 1 Dissecting words to aid understanding 1

Part 2 Alphabetic glossary 11

Part 3 Notes 231

PART 1

DISSECTING WORDS TO AID UNDERSTANDING

The terminology associated with anatomy, physiology and pathophysiology can sometimes feel like a foreign language and in essence you would be right; the terms are primarily derived from Greek and Latin. However, a good starting point for learning and understanding the terminology is to break the words down into their separate components of prefix and suffix. Once you have a good working knowledge of those parts, learning and understanding the terms becomes much easier.

It is important to have a good grasp of the terminology as it is used as an international language in healthcare and is necessary for communicating with other members of the interdisciplinary team. Part of being a professional requires you to use the correct terms, remembering that you may have to explain these terms to people in your care.

Prefixes

A prefix appears at the beginning of a word and usually provides a clue as to what to expect in a word's meaning. It generally describes location and intensity. For example, adipo at the beginning of a word usually means it will refer to fat or lipids in some way. Breaking down adipocytes is a good example where *adipo* refers to fat and the suffix (explained below) *cyte* refers to cell – fat cells. A list of commonly used prefixes can be found in Table 1.1.

Suffixes

Suffixes are placed at the end of words to change the original meaning. In terminology associated with anatomy, physiology and pathophysiology, a suffix usually indicates a procedure, condition or disease. In essence, a suffix tells you what is wrong with a specific body part or system or how to fix it. For example, a commonly used suffix is -itis, which means 'inflammation.' When this suffix is paired with the prefix arthro-, meaning joint, the resulting word is arthritis, an inflammation of the joints. A list of commonly used suffixes can be found in Table 1.2.

Table 1.1 Commonly Used Prefixes

Prefix	Meaning
a/an-	Without
ab-	Away from
ad-	Toward, near to
aden(o)	Pertaining to a gland
aer(o)-	Air
adip/o-	Fat
af-	Toward
all(o)-	Other
ana-	Up, apart, backward, again, anew
angi(o)-	Vessel (blood)
ante-	Before, forward
anti-	Against
apo-	Off, away
arteri(o)-	Artery
arthr(o)-	Pertaining to a joint
asthen(o)-	Weakness
ather(o)-	Plaque (fatty substance)
aut/auto-	Self, own

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Prefix	Meaning
bar(o)-	Pressure, weight
bas(o)-	Base, opposite of acid
bi-	Two, twice, double
blast(o)-	Germ or cell
brady-	Slow
cardi(o)-	Pertaining to the heart
cata-	Down, lower
cerebr(o)-	Pertaining to the cerebrum
chole-	Pertaining to bile
chondr(o)-	Cartilage
chrom(o)-	Colour
circum-	Around
contra-	Against, counter
cyt(o)-	Pertaining or referring to a cell
de-	Lack of, down, less, removal of
dia-	Through, completely, across, apart
dipl(o)-	Double
dis-	Apart, to separate
dys-	Bad, painful, difficult, abnormal
ecto-	Out, outside
eff-	Out, out of, from
em/en-	In, on
end(o)-	In, within
enter(o)-	Pertaining to the intestines
eosin(o)-	Red, rosy, dawn-coloured
epi-	Above, upon, on
erythr(o)-	Red
eu-	Good, normal

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Prefix	Meaning
ex(o)-	Out, away from
extra-	Outside
gastr(o)-	Pertaining to the stomach
glyc(o)-, glycos(o)-	Glucose, sugar
gynaec(o)-	Pertaining to female reproductive organs
haem-	Blood
hapl(o)-	Simple, single
hemi-	Half
hepat(o)-	Liver
hetero-	Other, different
homeo-	Sameness, unchanging, constant
hydr(o)-	Water
hyper-	Above, excessive
hypo-	Deficient, below, under, less than normal
infra-	Beneath
inter-	Between
intra-	Within, into
intro-	Into, within
iso-	Same, equal
juxta-	Near
kary(o)-	Nucleus
kerat(o)-	Hard, horny tissue (due to keratin)
kines(o)-, kinesi(o)-	Movement
leuk(o)-	White
lip(o)-	Fat, lipid
ly(o)-	To dissolve, loosen

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Prefix	Meaning
macro-	Large
mal-	Bad
medi-	Middle
mega-	Large, enlarged
melan-	Black
meso-	Middle
meta-	Change, beyond
micro-	Small
multi-	Many
my(o)-	Muscle
nas(o)-	Pertaining to the nose
necr(o)-	Death
neo-	New
nephr(o)	Pertaining to the kidney
neur(o)-	Nerve
neutr(o)-	Neutral
noci-	To cause harm, injury or pain
oligo-	Few, less than
oophor(o)-	Pertaining to the ovary
opthalm(o)-	Pertaining to the eye
orchid(o)-	Pertaining to the testicle
oro-	Pertaining to the mouth
oste(o)-	Bone
ot(o)-	Pertaining to the ear
para-	Near, beside, abnormal, apart from, along the side of
patho-	Disease
per-	Through

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Prefix	Meaning
peri-	Surrounding, around
phag(o)-	Pertaining to eating, ingesting or engulfing
pharyng(o)-	Pertaining to the pharynx/throat
phleb(o)	Pertaining to veins
pneum(o)-, pneumon(o)-	Lung, air, gas
poly-	Many, much
post-	After, behind
pre-	Before, in front of
pro-	Before, forward
proct(o)-	Pertaining to the rectum
proxim(o)-	Near
pseud(o) -	False
psych(o)-	Pertaining to the mind
pulm(o)-	Pertaining to the lung
pyel(o)-	Pertaining to the (renal) pelvis
quadri-	Four
retro-	Backward, located behind
rhin(o)-	Pertaining to the nose
sarc(o)-	Flesh (connective tissue)
semi-	Half, partly
somat(o)-	Body
steno-	Narrow, contracted
sub-	Under, below
super-	Above
supra-	Above, upper
syn-/sym-	Together, with

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Prefix	Meaning
tachy-	Fast, rapid
tel(o)-	Complete
thorac(o)-	Pertaining to the thorax/chest
thromb(o)-	Clot
trans-	Across, through
tri-	Three, triple
ultra-	Beyond, in excess
vas(o)-	Vessel
viscer(o)-	Internal organs

Table 1.2 Commonly Used Suffixes

Suffix	Meaning
-able, -ible	Ability to, capable of
-aemia, -aemic	Pertaining or referring to blood
-aesthesia	Condition of sensation
-al, -ar	Pertaining to
-algia	Referring to pain
-ary	Pertaining to, connected with
-ase	Enzyme
-ate	Action or state
-blast	Embryonic, immature cell
-centesis	A piercing, pertaining to a procedure in which an organ or body cavity is punctured, often to drain excess fluid or obtain a sample for analysis
-cle, -cula, -cule, -culum, -culus	Diminutive
-crine	To secrete, separate
-cyte	Pertaining or referring to a cell

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Suffix	Meaning
-ectasis	Dilation/distension
-ectomy	Removal, cutting out
-emesis	Vomiting
-erg/o	Pertaining or referring to work
-flux	Flow
-form	Shape, structure
-fugal	Movement away from
-genesis, -gen, -genic	Producing, forming
-gram	Record, recording, writing
-ia	State, condition
-ic	Pertaining to
-ile	Pertaining to, characteristic of
-ion	Process, action
-ism	Process, condition
-itis	Inflammation
-ity	State
-kinesis	Movement
-lith	Stone
-logy	Study of/branch of
-lysis	Breakdown, separation, destruction, loosening
-megaly	Enlargement of
-metry	Process of measuring
-oid	Resembling, derived from
-ole	Little, small
-oma	Tumour
-ostomy	Surgical creation of an opening, or hole
-otomy	Surgical incision

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Suffix	Meaning
-oxia	Condition of oxygenation
-pathy	Disease or a system for treating disease
-penia	Deficiency of
-phage, -phagia	Eat, swallow, ingestion of, consumption
-phil-	Like, love, attraction to
-phob-	Fear
-plasia	Growth, formation
-plegia	Paralysis of
-pnoea	Pertaining to breathing
-poiesis	Formation
-rrhagia	bleeding from, flow of
-rrhoea	Flow
-sclerosis	Hardening
-sis	State or process
-stasis	To stop, control, place
-tax/o	Order, coordination
-tomy	Cut/incise
-ton/o	Tension
-trophy	Nourishment, development (condition of)
-uria	Refers to urine condition
-zyme	Enzyme

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