



Terminology for Hand Surgery

International Federation of Societies
for Surgery of the Hand

TERMINOLOGY FOR HAND SURGERY

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF SOCIETIES FOR SURGERY OF THE HAND

Committee on Standardization of Nomenclature

1970

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PREFACE

The International Federation of Societies for Surgery of the Hand (IFSSH) was created in 1966, consisting of eight Societies as its founding members: American Society for Surgery of the Hand, British Society for Surgery of the Hand, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Handchirurgie, Japanese Society for Surgery of the Hand, Scandinavian Society for Surgery of the Hand, Sociedade Brasileira de Cirurgia da Mão, Società Italiana di Chirurgia della Mano, and Société Française de Chirurgie de la Main. The First World Congress was held in Rotterdam, and subsequently they have been held every three years. The Federation now includes some 47 Societies.

Various Committees have been established within the IFSSH over the course of its evolution. The Committee of Nomenclature was one of the earliest and has remained very active from the beginning. As Dr Alberto Lluch has stated in his Preface, the first booklet on Terminology for Hand Surgery was published in 1970 with 422 terms. The second one, a Clinical section on Hand Terminology came out in 1983, and both editions were later updated and compiled to become the third edition in 1985.

Sixteen years after the publication of the third edition, we now present the fourth edition. It has been thoroughly revised and updated through the painstaking efforts of the committee members headed by Dr Alberto Lluch. Without their continuous enthusiasm and endeavour, this edition would never have been made possible. This is certainly one of the most beautiful fruits the 'IFSSH orchard' has ever produced. As President of the IFSSH, I would like to congratulate Alberto, as well as all the other committee members, and at the same time offer my sincerest appreciation for their expertise and time that they have put into this very time consuming project over the past several years. I hope that all the IFSSH members will find this booklet useful in their daily practice, correspondence and paper writing.

Yasuo Yamauchi, M.D., Ph.D.

President of the International Federation of Societies for
Surgery of the Hand

INTRODUCTION

The present booklet on **Terminology for Hand Surgery** is an updating of the previous publications by the Committee on Standardization of Nomenclature of the International Federation of Societies for Surgery of the Hand.

The aim of the Nomenclature Committee is to select the most appropriate vocabulary to define the different anatomical structures and conditions in the hand, used by those interested in the study, prevention and treatment of conditions affecting the hand. Not only will this help communication between workers who use different languages, but also we hope to achieve a uniform vocabulary, with the added benefit of precision, for those using the same language

History

The first booklet on Terminology for Hand Surgery was published in June 1970, and it was restricted to anatomical terms and a short description of motor and sensory functions. There were 422 terms, with their equivalent translation in five languages, in addition to an atlas of joint motion, in English, following the guidelines of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

In 1983 a Clinical Section on Hand Terminology was published in the International Supplement of the *Journal of Hand Surgery* (Guide to terminology for hand surgery: Report of the Nomenclature Committee. Barton N. J Hand Surg (B) 1983; 8: 814–828).

Both publications were later compiled and updated in a third publication printed by The Pilgrims Press for the IFSSH in November 1985.

Twelve years later, in 1997, Dr Giorgio Brunelli (Italy) President of the IFSSH asked for the production of a new booklet on Terminology for Hand Surgery. We reviewed all the data compiled in the previous publications, as this would otherwise have been a monumental task if we had to start from the beginning.

Languages

The first problem that faced us was the selection of languages. The first booklet was published in 1970, with Mr Guy Pulvertaft

(England) being the President of the IFSSH, representing only 10 National and Regional Societies around the world. At present there are 48 National and Regional Societies represented by the IFSSH, communicating via a wide spectrum of languages. Although only 11 official languages have been recognised by UNESCO, in Europe alone 54 languages are currently used. Although the number of languages is considerably larger around the world, it was decided to continue using the languages employed in the previous Terminology for Hand Surgery. Latin is used for the description of all anatomical terms, as this is the recommended language by the Anatomists (*Nomina Anatomica*). The four living languages are English, German, French and Spanish. Dr Schmidt was responsible for the Latin terms, Mr Hooper for the English, Dr Lanz for the German, Dr Kapandji for the French and Dr Lluich for the Spanish. (Dr James Urbaniak and Dr Guy Foucher also assisted with the translations.)

We would like to apologize for not including other languages, such as Japanese, Russian, Italian, etc. used by a large number of highly qualified Hand Surgeons around the world. The cost and time needed to print the Terminology in as many languages as possible prevent it being a viable project, and perhaps the solution would be to place the Terminology on the Internet. By doing so, National Societies using other languages can incorporate their terms next to the ones in the present publication. Another advantage would be to keep the Nomenclature updated on almost a day-to-day basis.

All the Members of the present Committee were selected from Europe, solely for logistical reasons and to finish the project on time.

Contents

The booklet has been divided into four parts: *1. Anatomy; 2. Function; 3. Clinical evaluation; and 4. Treatment.* Chapter 3 (Clinical evaluation) has been subdivided in two: *3.1. Examination*, which includes all terms related to symptoms, signs and tests, and *3.2. Pathology.* At the end of the booklet there is a chapter on surface anatomy and joint motion.

The terms listed in each of the four chapters have been classified into the eight major anatomical structures composing the hand:

1. Bones; 2. Joints; 3. Muscles; 4. Tendons; 5. Fascia and Aponeurosis; 6. Nerves; 7. Vessels; and 8. Skin and accessories.

The reader can easily find the appropriate term for any structure in relation to its anatomy, function, pathology or treatment. The search is further facilitated by the inclusion of an index of contents on the first page. The exception is congenital deformities, which are described under a separate heading within the chapter on pathology, as they simultaneously relate to many anatomical structures. Following the guidelines of previous publications, the chapter on congenital anomalies avoids the use of eponyms as well as of animal comparisons used for the description of certain anomalies. Latin and Greek terms used for most of the anomalies have also been avoided as they are the same for all languages. However, the chapter on congenital anomalies is more of a classification than a list of words. We transcribed the classification recommended by the American Society for Surgery of the Hand (Classification for congenital limb malformations. Swanson AB. *J Hand Surg (A)* 1976; 1: 8–22). We are of the opinion that this chapter will need an updating in the future, accepting the fact that it will never be a perfect classification, as many congenital hand deformities consist of more than one category

We regret that Chapter 3.2.3. Pathology of Joints does not include a section on carpal instabilities. The main reason is that this subject is still under discussion in two different forums: the International Wrist Investigators Workshop and the Anatomy and Biomechanics Committee of the IFSSH. There seem to be slightly different opinions about the proper definition and use of the term ‘instability’, and even more so when referring to ‘static instability’, two apparently contradictory words. To compensate for this, Chapter 1.3. Anatomy of Joints includes a very comprehensive and updated listing of all wrist ligaments.

At the end of the booklet there is an *Atlas of Surface Anatomy and Joint Motion*. New schematic drawings were made to show the guidelines for measuring joint mobility. The neutral position or zero starting position (0°) for each joint is defined and the range of flexion is described as positive degrees, while extension is described as negative degrees. This is a divergence from the previous Nomenclatures that followed the guidelines proposed by the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons for the measurement of joint motion.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the Chairman and Members of the preceding Nomenclature Committees, who deserve our recognition for the tremendous work represented by the publication of the previous Nomenclatures for Hand Surgery. We have deleted or added several terms in line with the natural evolution and better understanding of hand pathology.

The printing of this booklet was approved by the IFSSH during the 7th Congress held in Vancouver, Canada, on May 1998 by Dr Yasuo Yamauchi, President, Dr James Urbaniak, Secretary General, and Dr Guy Foucher, Secretary General Elect, to whom we are indebted for all their efforts to get this project launched.

Chairman: Alberto Lluch, MD PhD. (*Spain*)

Members: Geoffrey Hooper, FRCS (*United Kingdom*)

Dr Adalbert Kapandji (*France*)

Prof. Dr Ulrich Lanz (*Germany*)

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