

The history of The Glossary of Prosthodontic Terms



The Glossary of Prosthodontic Terms, the gold standard for terms and definitions in the specialty and discipline of prosthodontics.

In any professional field, universally accepted terminology is essential for communication among colleagues and for advancement of the field. The specialty of prosthodontics is no different.

When prosthodontics was recognized as a specialty of dentistry by the American Dental Association House of Delegates in 1947, there was no official glossary of terms for this new specialty. In the first half of the twentieth century, prosthodontic terms were inconsistent, with substantial lack of agreement on the terms that should be used and on their definitions. A dictionary devoted to terms in medicine and dentistry was first published in the nineteenth century, but this dictionary and its subsequent editions had limited applicability to the specialty of prosthodontics.^{1,2}

Recognizing the need for a glossary devoted exclusively to the specialty, the Academy of Denture Prosthetics (now known as the Academy of Prosthodontics), embarked on an endeavor to create an official glossary. In the course of 2 “workshops,” almost 1000 terms were studied and debated by the Nomenclature Committee of the Academy. In 1956, the first edition of the glossary was published, and it represented a monumental effort by some of the best minds and forward-thinking individuals in the specialty. Dr Carl O. Boucher, the editor of *The Journal of Prosthetic Dentistry* and former president of the Academy of Denture Prosthetics (1951), served as the chair of the Nomenclature Committee. The preface to the first edition gives special recognition to Dr George B. Denton of the Bureau of Library and Indexing of the American Dental Association for his advice in preparing the glossary.

This glossary represented the initial step in officially recognizing and defining terms. As new information became available and new techniques and materials were

developed and introduced, it became clear that this glossary would require regular revisions. Editors for subsequent editions were Drs Carl O. Boucher (second edition), Judson Hickey (third edition), I. Kenneth Adisman (fourth edition), Jack Preston (fifth edition), and Clifford W. VanBlarcom (sixth, seventh, and eighth editions). The fifth edition represented the first major revision of the glossary. The sixth, seventh, and eighth editions further expanded the scope of the glossary to include explanatory notes along with pronunciation, functional labels, etymology (where known), first citation dates, usage labels, and an abbreviated history of some terms. The glossary is now in its ninth edition.

The ninth edition of the glossary was published by *The Journal of Prosthetic Dentistry* in May 2017 as an electronic version available at no charge online, and also as a web app. This ninth edition was compiled under the leadership of Dr Keith J. Ferro, Editor and Chair of the Glossary of Prosthodontic Terms Committee (formerly the Nomenclature Committee) along with committee members, Drs Steven M. Morgano (Copy Editor), Carl F. Driscoll, Martin A. Freilich, Albert D. Guckes, Kent L. Knoernschild, and Thomas J. McGarry. Drs Arun Sharma and Baldwin Marchack oversaw the development of the Glossary web app.

The task of revising the ninth edition of the glossary began with consulting all prosthodontic program directors by using a Delphi survey technique, followed by surveying selected fellows of the Academy. The survey asked three questions relative to each term in the eighth edition: This is NOT a prosthodontic term? (yes/no); This term is obsolete? (yes/no); and This term needs to be changed? (yes/no). Results of these surveys were used as a starting point to determine which terms should be deleted because they were not relevant to prosthodontics, which terms were obsolete and out of place in a modern-day glossary, and which definitions or terms required change.

Revision of the glossary required routine copy editing to correct typographical errors, errors in punctuation,

errors in alphabetical sequencing of terms, problems with lack of consistency, as well as factual errors in some of the definitions. Considerable research was necessary to validate the scientific accuracy of definitions that were questionable, and expert opinion from a number of sources was consulted. The development of new terms and new definitions was also a substantial undertaking. Major prosthodontic organizations and journal editors were consulted with regard to the necessity of adding new terms that have been in common use for years but were not listed (such as, "Pound's triangle"), as well as the need to add terms that have been recently coined by the profession as a result of emerging advancements in materials, techniques, or technology.

The most contentious term in the entire revision process was "centric relation." In 1929, Hanau³ stated, "I have defined centric relation as that position of the mandible in which the condyle heads are resting upon the menisci in the sockets of the glenoid fossae, regardless of the opening of the jaws, and have stated that the relation is either strained or unstrained." This is a rather straightforward definition of a term that was in widespread use at the time. Nevertheless, in the ensuing years, many complex and controversial definitions of this term were introduced.

In the first edition of the glossary, centric relation is defined as, "The most retruded relation of the mandible to the maxillae when the condyles are in the most posterior unstrained position in the glenoid fossae from which lateral movements can be made, at any given degree of jaw separation."⁴ The fifth edition represented a major change, and centric relation is defined as, "A maxillomandibular relationship in which the condyles articulate with the thinnest avascular portion of their respective disks with the complex in the anterior-superior position against the slopes of the articular eminences. This position is independent of tooth contact. This position is clinically discernible when the mandible is directed superiorly and anteriorly and restricted to a purely rotary movement about a transverse horizontal axis. This term is in transition to obsolescence."⁵ This definition was originally written by Dr Frank V. Celenza, with the sentence about "obsolescence" added by the committee.

The eighth edition had 7 definitions for centric relation, but the first definition (preferred definition) was similar to the Fifth Edition definition. An ad hoc subcommittee was formed by Dr Ferro to formulate a single, all-inclusive definition for the ninth edition. Members of the subcommittee were Drs Gary Goldstein, Steven Morgano, Jonathan Wiens, and Keith Ferro. Two definitions were written by two of the subcommittee members. These two definitions were submitted to the members of the Glossary of Prosthodontic Terms Committee, who were asked to choose one of them. The committee members chose the definition written by Dr Morgano, "a maxillomandibular relationship, independent of tooth contact, in which the

condyles articulate in the anterior-superior position against the posterior slopes of the articular eminences; in this position, the mandible is restricted to a purely rotary movement; from this unstrained, physiologic, maxillomandibular relationship, the patient can make vertical, lateral or protrusive movements; it is a clinically useful, repeatable reference position."⁶ This definition was a composite of a number of previous definitions and was structured to ensure a single comprehensive definition. Hopefully this definition will withstand the test of time.

The Glossary of Prosthodontic Terms is one of the crown jewels of the Academy, and the Academy is very grateful to the members of the original Nomenclature Committee and all subsequent committees for their efforts in keeping this glossary updated and relevant. The chairs of these committees deserve special thanks for their leadership.

The Glossary of Prosthodontic Terms is used worldwide as the gold standard for terms and definitions in the specialty and discipline of prosthodontics, and the impact globally on the practice of prosthodontics and the prosthodontic literature cannot be overstated. The ninth edition is the most comprehensive revision ever achieved. There were 12 775 changes made in the ninth edition with 163 deleted terms and 316 modified or newly added terms. It is a living document that will continue to be revised periodically to keep up with the imminent burgeoning and fast-paced changes in our knowledge and understanding of prosthodontics.

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