

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

Glossary of Terms

Accessory apartment: A separate apartment created within a single-family residence that results in little or no change in the house's external appearance.

Activities of daily living (ADL): Basic self-care activities, including eating, bathing, dressing, transferring from bed to chair, bowel and bladder control, and independent ambulation, which are widely used as a basis for assessing individual functional status.

Acute care: Medical care designed to treat or cure disease or injury, usually within a limited time period. Acute care usually refers to physician and/or hospital services whose duration is less than 3 months.

Acute condition: An illness or disorder which is characterized by a sudden onset, sharp rise, and short course.

Adult day cam: Social and health services provided for physically or mentally impaired individuals in a nonresidential, day-care setting.

Age-adjusted rate: An indicator of the actual change in demographic rates over time that controls for the effects of age-structure differences in the population by weighting the age-specific rates according to the age distribution of the population in a given, earlier, reference year.

Age-specific rate: The rate of occurrence of an event (e.g., death, marriage, birth, illness) for a specified **age group in a population.**

Aged: Persons aged 65 and over.

Aging: The gradual changes in the structure of any organism that occur with the passage of time, that do not result from disease or other gross accidents, and that eventually lead to the increased probability of death as the individual grows older. This process is associated with genetic and biological factors, environmental influences, and, for humans, socioeconomic status.

Aging of the population: The increasing proportion in the total population of older (65 and over) relative to younger (less than 65) persons. It is generally measured in percentage distribution by age group, but also measured in median age, the age at which 50 percent of the population is older and 50 percent is younger.

Alzheimer disease: The most common form of dementia, an organic brain disease leading to progressive loss of brain function and eventual death. The cause is unknown and there is no effective standard medical treatment.

Appropriate technology: Technology that is developed or adapted in response to the needs, desires, and capabilities of impaired people.

Arteriosclerosis: A group of diseases characterized by the thickening and loss of elasticity in the arterial walls of either the brain or the heart.

Arthritis: Inflammation of the joints due to infectious, metabolic, or constitutional causes.

Assessment technology: Testing instruments or procedures to measure and evaluate the physical, mental, and social functioning of individuals.

Assistive device: A tool, prosthesis, or gadget that helps the individual to compensate for certain functional impairments, such as hearing or vision loss, or difficulty walking or eating.

Atherosclerosis: An extremely common form of arteriosclerosis in which deposits of yellowish plaques containing cholesterol and lipid materials are formed within the walls of large and medium-sized arteries.

Board and care homes: Nonmedical facilities that provide room and board and some degree of protective supervision on a 24-hour basis. Examples include adult foster homes, group homes, larger residential care facilities, and retirement homes.

Cancer: A malignant tumor of potentially unlimited growth that expands locally by invasion and systematically by metastasis (transfer from one site to another).

Cavitation: A uniform payment or fee for service.

Cardiovascular disease: Heart disease; resulting from debilitation of the heart and blood vessels.

Cerebrovascular disease: Stroke; resulting from debilitation of the blood vessels of the cerebrum, or brain.

Channeling demonstration program: The National Long-Term Care Demonstration Program, funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Administration on Aging (AoA), designed to test the efficacy of case management in controlling costs and improving access to appropriate long-term care.

Chronic condition A physical or mental illness or disorder characterized by a long duration (usually more than three months) or frequent recurrence.

Cohort A population group that shares a common property, characteristic, or event, such as a year of birth or year of marriage. The most common cohort is the *birth cohort*, a group of individuals born within a defined time period, usually a calendar year or a 5-year interval.

Cohort component method: A system which separately projects age- and sex-specific fertility, mortality, and net migration rates for each 1-year or 5-year birth cohort, using a base population derived from the most recent census. Projections often include three alternative levels of each demographic component.

Cohort data: Information relevant to particular population groups that are defined by birth or other historical events or dates and which are used to indicate change over time.

Cohort effect The consequences of the particular set of historical events that a cohort experiences over time.

Congregate housing A group-living environment that provides an onsite meal program and may provide other social, medical, and recreational services. Residents have private apartments within the housing facility.

Crude rate The number of "events" (e.g., births, deaths) occurring within a total population, often expressed as number per 1,000 population.

Deafness: A degree of hearing impairment that renders hearing nonfunctional for ordinary purposes.

Dementia: The loss of intellectual mental function, due to many different acute and chronic diseases, including Alzheimer disease, which may affect the white matter and blood supply of the cerebrum.

Diabetes mellitus A familial constitutional disorder of carbohydrate metabolism that is characterized by inadequate secretion or utilization of insulin, by excessive amounts of sugar in the blood and urine, and by thirst, hunger, and loss of weight.

Diagnosis-related groups (DRGs): A classification system that groups patients according to diagnosis, type of treatment, age, and other relevant criteria. In October 1983, Medicare instituted a prospective reimbursement system based on 467 DRGs. Under this system, hospitals are paid a set fee for treating patients in a single DRG category, regardless of the actual cost of care for the individual.

Disability: The inability to perform an activity in the manner or in the range considered normal because of physical or mental impairment.

Diuretics Agents (e.g., drugs) that tend to increase the secretion and flow of urine.

Echo (elder cottage housing opportunity) housing unit A compact, efficiently designed, temporary structure that are erected in backyards of family homes and designed for use by elderly relatives. Also referred to as *granny flat*.

Elderly household Any household that is maintained (or "headed") by a person aged 65 or older.

Elderly population All persons aged 65 and over. In designated cases in this report the age identifier can be as low as 40 years (e.g., "older worker" in the ADEA) or as high as 85 years (the very old).

Electronic cottage A computer-based office at home that may provide opportunities for older workers who want to work on a part-time or flex-time basis and/or avoid travel to work.

Environmental fit (environmental congruence): The extent to which the physical, social, and psychological milieu responds to the needs of the individual. In many cases, environmental "demands" can be alleviated by changes in one or more elements of the environment, thereby providing improved environmental fit or congruence.

Fertility: The number of live births occurring to women of child-bearing age (usually expressed as "the annual number of births per 1,001) women aged 15 to 44").

Functional dependence The inability to attend to one's own needs, including the basic activities of daily living. Dependence may result from the changes that accompany natural aging, or from a disease or related pathological condition.

Functional impairment Inability to perform basic self-care functions such as eating, dressing, and bathing, or instrumental home management activities such as cooking, shopping, or cleaning because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition.

Geriatric assessment center: An agency that provides multidisciplinary evaluations of physical, mental, emotional, and social problems of elderly patients and recommends appropriate action.

Handicap: A disadvantage resulting from a physical or mental impairment or disability that limits or prevents the fulfillment of a role that is normal (for that individual) in a given environment.

Hard technology: Tangible products of research and development efforts, such as machines, robots, appliances, drugs, and physical aids.

Hearing impairment: A deficit in hearing acuity, including both partial and total hearing loss.

High technology: Complex products of research and development efforts, including items such as sophis-

- ticated new medical instruments, surgical procedures, or computerized robotic manufacturing systems.
- Home care** Medical, social, and supportive services provided in the home, usually intended to maintain independent functioning and avoid institutionalization.
- Hospice** A method of care that provides supportive medical and social services for terminally ill individuals and their families. Hospice services can be provided in a hospital, nursing home, congregate center, or the patient's home.
- Household** A social unit comprised of those living together in the same dwelling, whether they are related to each other or not (sometimes distinguished as single-person households or family and nonfamily households).
- Housing tenure** House ownership or rental status.
- Hypertension** In the elderly, defined as blood pressure greater than 140/90 mmHg, or isolated systolic blood pressure greater than 160 with normal diastolic blood pressure.
- Impairment** A physical or mental abnormality that can be readily identified or diagnosed.
- Incidence** The estimated number of new cases of a given illness or condition appearing within a specified time period (which in this report is generally one year), within a defined population group.
- Information technology** The application of computers and telecommunication systems to the creation, storage, manipulation, and dissemination of information.
- Instrumental activities of daily living (IADL)**: Home management and independent living activities, such as cooking, cleaning, using a telephone, shopping, doing laundry, and managing money.
- Joint debridement** Removal of unwanted tissue from the joint space.
- Life care continuing care communities**~ Communities that provide a continuum of services for elderly residents, including homes or apartments for independent living, home care services, infirmary, and, sometimes, nursing home services. Payment of an initial membership or entrance fee and a monthly fee guarantees the individual most types of long-term care services for the rest of his life.
- Life expectancy**: A measure of the average remaining years of life at specified ages for different subgroups (e.g., by sex and race) of a population.
- Life span** The biological upper age limit that a human can potentially reach, currently considered to be about 115 years.
- Long-term care** A variety of health and social services provided for individuals who need assistance because of physical or mental disability. Services can be provided in an institution, the home, or the community, and include *informal services* provided by family or friends as well as *formal services* provided by professionals or agencies.
- Low technology**: Simple products of research and development efforts, such as in-home assistive devices and gadgets.
- Medicaid** A Federal/State program, authorized by Title XIX of the Social Security Act, to provide medical care for low income individuals. Federal regulations specify mandated services, but States can determine optional services and eligibility standards. The Federal Government's share of costs ranges from 50 to 78 percent and is based on per capita income in the State.
- Medical technologies** Drugs, devices, and medical and surgical procedures used in medical care, and the organizational and support systems within which they are produced and provided.
- Medicare** A federally funded health insurance program authorized by Title XVIII of the Social Security Act to pay for medical care for eligible elderly and disabled beneficiaries. Medicare reimburses part of the costs for acute care and some types of long-term care. Beneficiaries pay an annual deductible and co-payments for most covered services. The program is divided into two sections: Part A, which covers hospital and inpatient physicians' services, and an optional Part B, which covers some outpatient physicians' services.
- Medigap insurance** Insurance policies offered by private companies designed to cover part of the cost of the Medicare deductibles, co-payments, and some medical services that are not reimbursable by Medicare.
- Morbidity** The relative incidence or prevalence of disease, generally expressed in rates for specific populations in a specified period of time.
- Mortality**: The number or proportion of deaths in a given population within a specified period of time.
- Myocardial infarction** A heart attack that is generated by a blood clot.
- Neoplasm**: See *cancer*.
- Nursing home** A long-term care facility that provides 24-hour care, skilled nursing care, and personal care on an inpatient basis.
- Nutrition** The sum of processes by which an organism takes in, breaks down, and utilizes food substances.
- Obesity**: Body weight that exceeds by 20 percent or more the amounts specified in standardized tables according to sex, age, and height.
- Old** Persons aged 75 to 84.
- osteoarthritis** A degenerative joint disease occurring

- chiefly in older persons, accompanied by pain and stiffness. Also known as “osteoarthrosis” and “hypertrophic arthritis.”
- Osteoporosis** Porous bone; a condition in which total bone mass is decreased while bone volume is unchanged, therefore decreasing the overall density of the bone. Osteoporosis is estimated to cause two-thirds of hip fractures in older people.
- Osteotomy** A surgical reshaping of the bone to reduce stress, or to provide a more favorable anatomic orientation of the joint.
- Period data** Information about variables or events that characterize a population during a specified short period of time, usually 1 year.
- Pharmacokinetics** The study of the bodily absorption, distribution, metabolism, and excretion of drugs.
- Population pyramid** A graphic representation of the sex and age composition of a population, using either 1- or 5-year age intervals for each sex to age 85 and over. The pyramid is expressed in numbers or proportions of persons in each subgroup.
- Postmarketing surveillance** Monitoring of actual drug use to help identify unknown, adverse reactions, in order to establish drug safety and efficacy.
- Presbycusis** Age-associated hearing loss caused by changes in the inner ear.
- Premarket testing** Experimentation to determine the safety, toxicity, dosage range, and efficacy of drugs prior to marketing.
- Prevalence** The estimated or enumerated number of events (e.g., deaths or persons with a disease) existing in a defined population during a specified period of time (in this report, generally 1 year).
- Prevention and preventive strategies** Application of a technology or modification of a behavior pattern that is intended to avert or delay the occurrence of an unwanted or disabling condition.
- Prospective payment system** A hospital payment method in which rates are set prior to the period during which they apply and in which the hospital incurs at least some financial risk; rates are based on diagnosis-related groups (DRGs).
- Randomized clinical trial** A study of different clinical treatments in which individuals are randomly assigned to test or to control groups.
- Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA)** Estimates of the minimum levels of specific nutrients needed to maintain normal function; they may be specified for subpopulations defined by age, sex, height, and weight.
- Rehabilitation** Social or medical care designed to restore patients to their former capacity or to a condition of health or independent activity.
- Respite care** Physical care and supervision provided for an ill or disabled individual in order to temporarily relieve the primary caregiver from such responsibility.
- Risk factors** Characteristics, behaviors, substances, or environmental and other factors that are statistically associated with an increased likelihood of developing a given condition.
- Social/health maintenance organization (S/HMO)** A provider of a wide range of health and social services for a prepaid annual premium.
- Soft technology** A process or organizational system, such as research and the development of new knowledge, which can lead to the development of hard technology.
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** A Federal program enacted in 1972 to provide monthly cash payments to aged, disabled, and blind individuals who have incomes below the minimum levels established for these subpopulations.
- Technology** The development of knowledge and/or its application to solving practical tasks and problems. Technology can refer to such factors as biomedical research into the causes of arthritic conditions as well as wheelchairs used by persons suffering from severe arthritis. Technology can be described as “soft” (research and knowledge), or “hard” (products of research), and “high” (complex) or “low” (simple).
- Terminal illness** A life-threatening illness or advanced stage of a serious condition for which there is no hope of survival.
- Third-party payers** A method of financing health care, in which an individual purchases insurance from a private (nongovernmental) third party, which in turn will reimburse the individual’s health care provider, usually on a per-service basis.
- Title III of the Older Americans Act** Federal legislation that provides funding to States for development and coordination of services for the elderly. The Administration on Aging allocates Title 111 funds to States primarily on the basis of the proportion of each State’s population aged 60 and over.
- Title XX of the Social Security Act** Federal legislation that provides funding to States for social services for individuals of all ages. Title XX was restructured as a block grant in 1981 and Federal requirements for eligibility and services were eliminated.
- Urinary incontinence** Inability to control urinary function.
- Very old** Persons aged 85 and over.
- Vitality** Ability to remain functionally independent, or to be minimally dependent on various types of assistance.
- Young old** Persons aged 65 to 74.

Glossary of Acronyms

AAA	— Area Agency on Aging	hCG	— human chorionic gonadotropin
AARP	— American Association of Retired Persons	HDL	— high density lipoproteins
AAT	— alpha-1 antitrypsin	HHA/HRA	— health hazard/health risk appraisal
ACS	— American Cancer Society	HMO	— health maintenance organization
ADA	— American Dietetic Association	HUD	— Housing and Urban Development (U.S. Department of)
ADAMHA	— Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration	IADL	— instrumental activities of daily living
ADEA	— Age Discrimination in Employment Act	ICD	— International Classification of Diseases
ADL	— activities of daily living (functional status scale)	IND	— investigational new drug
AHA	— American Heart Association	IOM	— Institute of Medicine (National Academy of Sciences)
AHS	— American Housing Survey (formerly, Annual Housing Survey)	IPP	— Investment in People Program
AMA	— American Medical Association	JCAH	— Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals
ANDs	— Administratively Necessary Days	JTPA	— Joint Training Partnership Act
AoA	— Administration on Aging (USDHHS)	LDL	— low density lipoproteins
AT&T	— American Telephone and Telegraph co.	LTC	— long-term care
BLS	— Bureau of Labor Statistics	MAB	— monoclonal antibody
BSE	— breast self examination	MVSR	— <i>Monthly Vital Statistics Report</i> (NCHS)
CAT	— computerized axial tomography	NAS	— National Academy of Sciences
CBO	— Congressional Budget Office	NASA	— National Aeronautics and Space Administration
CDA	— Committee on Dietary Allowances of the Food and Nutrition Board	NCHS	— National Center for Health Statistics
CDBG	— Community Development Block Grants	NCPIE	— National Council for Patient Information and Education
CHD	— coronary heart disease	NHAS	— National Hearing Aid Society
CPI	— Consumer Price Index	NHIS	— National Health Interview Survey
CPR	— <i>Current Population Reports</i> (U.S. Bureau of the Census)	NHLBI	— National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
CRS	— Congressional Research Service	NIA	— National Institute on Aging
CWA	— Communications Workers of America	NIADDK	— National Institute of Arthritis, Diabetes, and Digestive Kidney Diseases
DHHS	— U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	NIH	— National Institutes of Health
DNA	— deoxyribonucleic acid	NIMH	— National Institute of Mental Health
DOL	— Department of Labor	NINCDS	— National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Diseases and Stroke
DRGs	— diagnosis-related groups	NIOSH	— National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health
DRI	— Data Resources Inc.	NNHS	— National Nursing Home Survey
EEOC	— Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	OARS	— Older Americans Resources and Services (assessment instrument)
FDA	— Food and Drug Administration	OMAR	— Office for Medical Applications Research
FmHA	— Farmers Home Administration	OTA	— Office of Technology Assessment
FSP	— Food Stamp Program	OTC	— over-the-counter (drugs)
FTC	— Federal Trade Commission	PBS	— Public Broadcasting System
GAO	— U.S. General Accounting Office	PHS	— U.S. Public Health Service
GI	— gastrointestinal	PMS	— post-marketing surveillance (generally used for drug testing)
GNP	— gross national product	PRO	— professional review organization
HANES	— National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey	RDA	— Recommended Dietary Allowance
HCFA	— Health Care Financing Administration (USDHHS)	rDNA	— recombinant deoxyribonucleic acid
		SES	— socioeconomic status

SMMO — social (services) and health
maintenance organization
SNF — skilled nursing facility
SSA — Social Security Administration
SSI — Supplemental Security Income
TDD — telecommunication device for the deaf

TEFRA — Tax Equity Financing Reform Act
TPA — tissue plasminogen activator
USDHHS — U.S. Department of Health and
Human Services
VA — Veterans Administration