

# FinMeSH – the solid ground for a health metathesaurus in Finland

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## BACKGROUND

The Finnish Medical Society Duodecim has almost all of the 18,000 Finnish doctors as members. The Society owns the Duodecim Medical Publications company, which has focus on electronic publishing for both health professionals and citizens. One of the products of the Duodecim Medical Publications is the Finnish translation of the MeSH thesaurus, FinMeSH.

## HISTORY

The need of a translation of the MeSH thesaurus into Finnish arose in the middle of the 1980's in the Finnish Medical Society Duodecim. The first partial translation made in 1989 was followed by the full second version in 1997 and a third revised version in 2004. Now, FinMeSH is updated once a year to match the original MeSH in English.

## FINMESH TODAY

FinMeSH is used as the main thesaurus in the Finnish Health Portal which includes the Finnish version of the Evidence-Based Medicine Guidelines (EBMG) collection. A continuous log file recording the search strategies of the Health Portal provides information on the search terms used, including the most common abbreviations and spelling mistakes. The log file is used to supplement FinMeSH with appropriate synonyms. For the time being FinMeSH contains over 73 000 terms – that is, every single subject heading is supplemented with approximately two synonyms. The MeSH scope notes have not been translated, but they are included in English in the FinMeSH database. Furthermore, an MeSH-independent electronic dictionary (Finnish Medical Terms) contains definitions of most MeSH terms in Finnish.

The screenshot shows the 'Metathesaurus Rex' interface for the term 'Hepatitis'. The main content area displays the following information:

- IDs**
  - REX: CF006270
  - FINMSH: D006505
  - UMLS: C0019158
- Rex Family**
  - Preferred Term
    - Maksatulehdus
  - Other terms
    - Maksatulehdukset
    - Hepatiitti
    - Hepatiitit
    - Hepatitis (lat)
- Location in Rex Hierarchy**
- MeSH**
  - ID: D006505
  - MeSH tree: C06.552.380
- Synonyms**
  - Preferred term
    - Hepatitis
- Definition**

INFLAMMATION of the LIVER.
- Allowed Qualifiers**
  - BL CF CL CN CO DH DI DT EC EH EM EN EP ET GE HI IM ME MI MO NU PA PC PP PS PX RA RH RI RT SU TH UR US VI
  - (Abbreviations: see list on NLM website.)
- History**
  - Added to MeSH: 1999
  - Last major revision: 2004
- Notes for the Indexer**
  - Annotation Note: GEN or unspecified; prefer specifics; probably non-viral; viral hepatitis = HEPATITIS, VIRAL, HUMAN & HEPATITIS, VIRAL, ANIMAL or their specifics; /chem ind = HEPATITIS, TOXIC but note HEPATITIS, ALCOHOLIC is also available

On the right side, there is a search interface with a search box containing 'hepatitis', a dropdown menu for 'Thesaurus' set to 'FinMeSH', and a 'Search Result' dropdown menu listing various categories like 'Maksatulehdus', 'Health Education Vocabulary', 'Health Care Specialities', 'Procedures', 'ATC classification', 'Nursing vocabulary', 'FinMeSH Qualifiers', and 'Metathesaurus'.

## METATHESAURUS REX

In 2003 the idea of a health metathesaurus ("Metathesaurus Rex") arose in the Duodecim Society: other electronic vocabularies in Finnish could be brought together with the FinMeSH to form a larger entity and the terms describing the same concept would be linked together. Building the metathesaurus did not cause any structural discrepancy between FinMeSH and the original MeSH. Metathesaurus Rex is a "miniature UMLS" in Finnish, with the FinMeSH as its core vocabulary. The main vocabularies and classifications that have been included in the metathesaurus so far are: FinMeSH, ICD-10 (International Classification of Diseases), ICPC-2 (International Classification of Primary Care), the ATC-classification (generic drug names by WHO), the NOMESCO classification for surgical procedures and the Finnish vocabulary on nursing.