

Translating Terminology for the Nutrition Care Process: The Swedish Experience (2010-2016)



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THE NUTRITION CARE PROCESS Terminology (NCPT) is intended for use by nutrition and dietetics practitioners internationally. Practitioners in other countries that want to use it will need to have it translated from English into their own language. This article describes in detail how the Swedish Association of Clinical Dietitians, an early adopter of the terminology and process, translated the NCPT. Translation has led to the inclusion of the NCP in dietetics education programs in Sweden and the recommendation for its use in Swedish clinical practice.¹ Based on this article, nutrition and dietetics practitioners can better understand the challenging and extensive process required in the translation and cultural adaptation of a standardized language for use in international health care environments that may be different from those in the United States.

The dietetics profession has existed in Sweden since the 1960s and now includes about 1,200 clinical registered dietitians (RDs). They are represented by the Swedish Association of Clinical Dietitians, which has no salaried staff. This means that much of the association's work is carried out on a voluntary basis. In 2005, during the development of the Swedish Code of Ethics for clinical RDs,² the importance of using consistent language and terms to describe professional issues became increasingly apparent. Terms that

were commonly used by RDs, such as *dietary advice*, *nutrition care*, and *enteral nutrition* were open to varying interpretations and therefore needed to be precisely defined. This led to the formation of the Swedish Association of Clinical Dietitians Terminology Group (now called the Workgroup for Informatics and Code of Ethics) and the production of a basic terminology list in Swedish for use by RDs and other practitioners involved in nutrition care. This helped to clarify the RD's professional role, facilitate the collection of data regarding nutrition care, and support the monitoring and planning of RDs' workloads.

The Swedish Association of Clinical Dietitians terminology group became aware of the NCP and the International Dietetics and Nutrition Terminology (IDNT), which later became the NCPT, developed by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (the Academy; then known as the American Dietetic Association). After some thorough research into the NCP and IDNT, it was decided in 2009 that RDs at the Department of Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics at Karolinska University Hospital in Stockholm would implement the NCP, thereby being the first hospital in Sweden to do so. This is the largest nutrition and dietetics department in Sweden, comprising >60 RDs working in most of the hospital's clinical departments and specialties with all patient age groups. In 2010, to facilitate the implementation process, Esther F. Myers, PhD, RDN, LRD, FAND, Chief Science Officer for Research and Scientific Affairs at the Academy, was invited to Sweden with the support of Nutricia to give a presentation for RDs in the Stockholm area and participate in discussions with representatives from the Department of Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics at Karolinska University Hospital and the Swedish Association

of Clinical Dietitians terminology group. This resulted in the Swedish Association of Clinical Dietitians and the Department of Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics at Karolinska University Hospital signing an agreement with the Academy that allowed translation into Swedish of the four NCP "snapshot" handouts and the terms and definitions of the Academy's third edition of the IDNT.³ This would become the Swedish short version of the IDNT,⁴ the first translated version of the IDNT to be used by clinical RDs in Sweden.

Because the full version of the IDNT manual is extensive, it would have been too time consuming and costly to translate it in full. It was decided to distribute the short version together with access to the online version of the IDNT manual developed by the Academy, thus enabling use of the reference sheets and other information in English. Work on the translation began in the fall of 2010, starting with Step 2, Nutrition Diagnostic Terminology, as this concept was new to dietetics practice in Sweden. During the translation process, the Nutrition Diagnostic Terminology was tested in clinical practice by RDs at Karolinska University Hospital and feedback from these RDs was particularly useful in the translation of the other three steps.

The translation took 6 months to complete and publish, during which time a series of articles introducing and discussing the NCP were published in the professional journal of the Swedish Association of Clinical Dietitians to prepare for release of the Swedish short version. In April 2011, the Swedish short version of the NCPT and definitions⁴ were presented at a 2-day National Congress organized by the Swedish Association of Clinical Dietitians. Both Myers and Naomi Trosler, PhD, RDN, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel, held lectures and

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workshops at the Congress as a first step in the introduction and implementation of the translated NCPT in clinical dietetics in Sweden.

CONCEPTUAL TRANSLATION OF TERMINOLOGY

Terminology is defined as the special words or phrases that are used in a particular field.⁵ Terminology uses a concept-based approach whereby concepts are defined and represented by terms. According to ISO Standard 1087-1:2000 these are defined as follows⁶:

- a *concept* is “a unit of knowledge created by a unique combination of characteristics”;
- a *term* is “a verbal designation of a general concept in a specific subject field”; and
- a *definition* is a “representation of a concept by a descriptive statement that serves to differentiate it from related concepts.”

Concepts are therefore fundamental to terminology and an international terminology aims to match concepts and terms in different languages. When translating terms into a target language, the meaning of the concept denoted by a term in the context in which it is used in the source language must first be fully understood. Once this is achieved, the translator has to find the corresponding term in the target language, during which particular care needs to be taken with the translation of culturally specific terms. Sometimes, for example, a source language term corresponds to a concept that does not exist in the target language culture. Alternatively, the term exists in the target language culture but refers to a concept different from that in the source language. It is, therefore, important to ensure that the equivalent term and definition fully describe the concept represented by the source language term and

definition in a way that can be easily understood.

If there is no corresponding source language term in the target language, then various strategies can be used in the translation. These may include, for example:

- The term can be translated literally, word for word.
- An explanation of the term can be used to form the term in the target language.
- The term is not translated and is used in the source language.
- A new term can be created in the target language.

THE TRANSLATION PROCESS USED IN SWEDEN

Translation of the snapshots, terms, and definitions of the four steps of the NCP was carried out in 2010 to provide a common terminology for the NCP in Swedish. The aim was to achieve

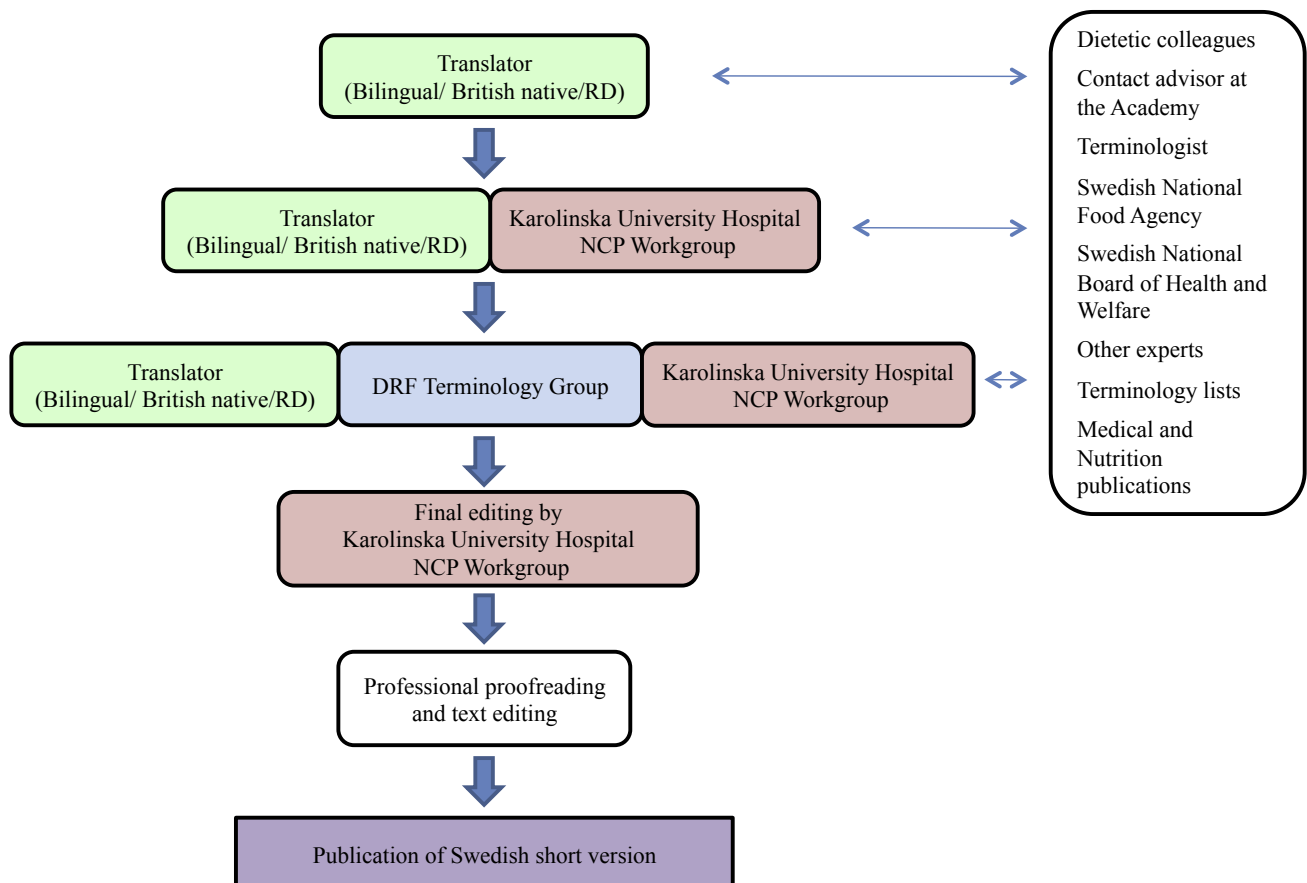


Figure 1. The steps used in the first translation of the Nutrition Care Process Terminology to produce the Swedish short version.

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