

From complexity to clarity: Terminology-based strategies for plain and patient-centered health communication”

Laia Vidal-Sabanés



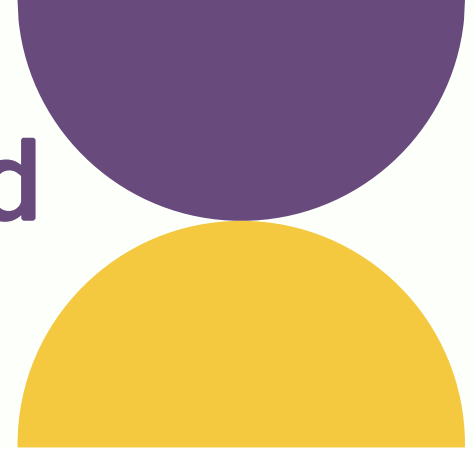
UNIVERSITAT DE
BARCELONA



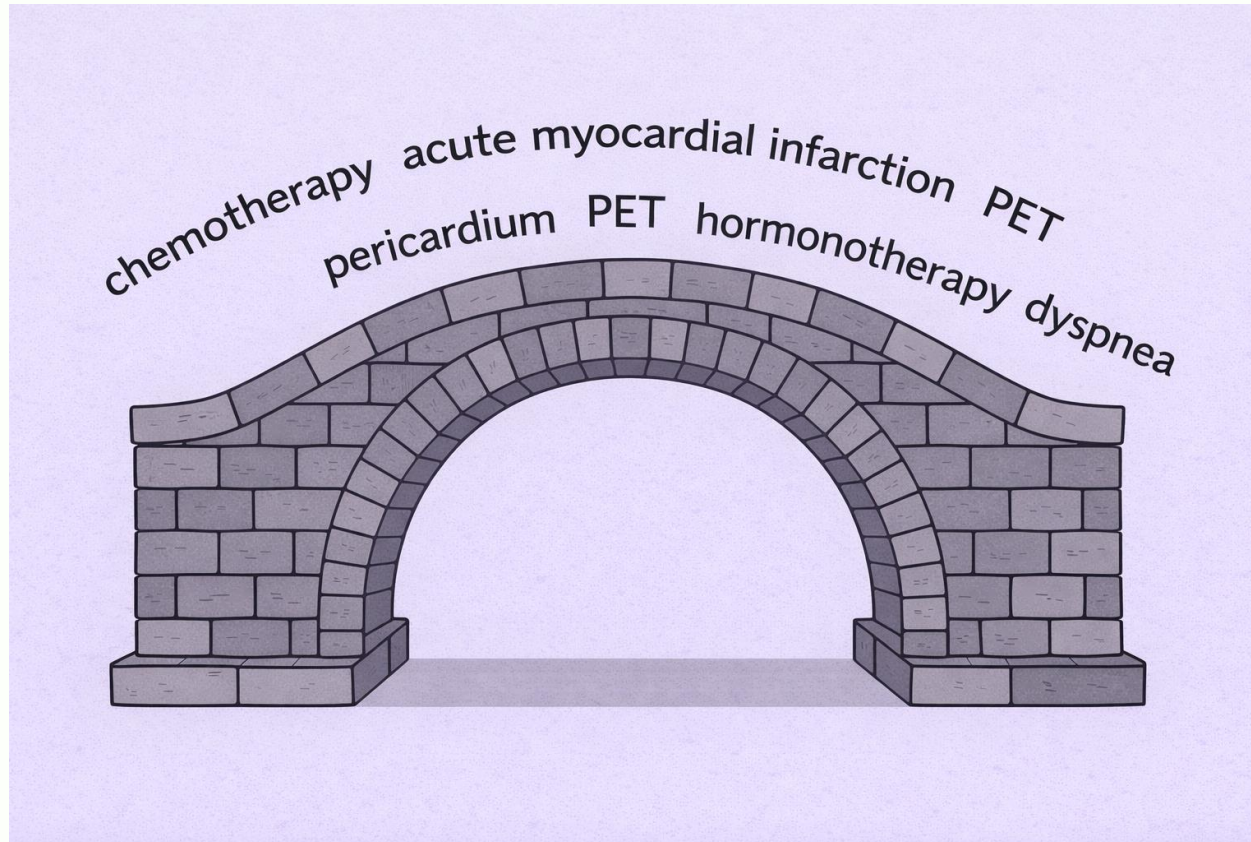
UAB
Universitat
Autònoma
de Barcelona

The real challenge: making specialized knowledge understandable

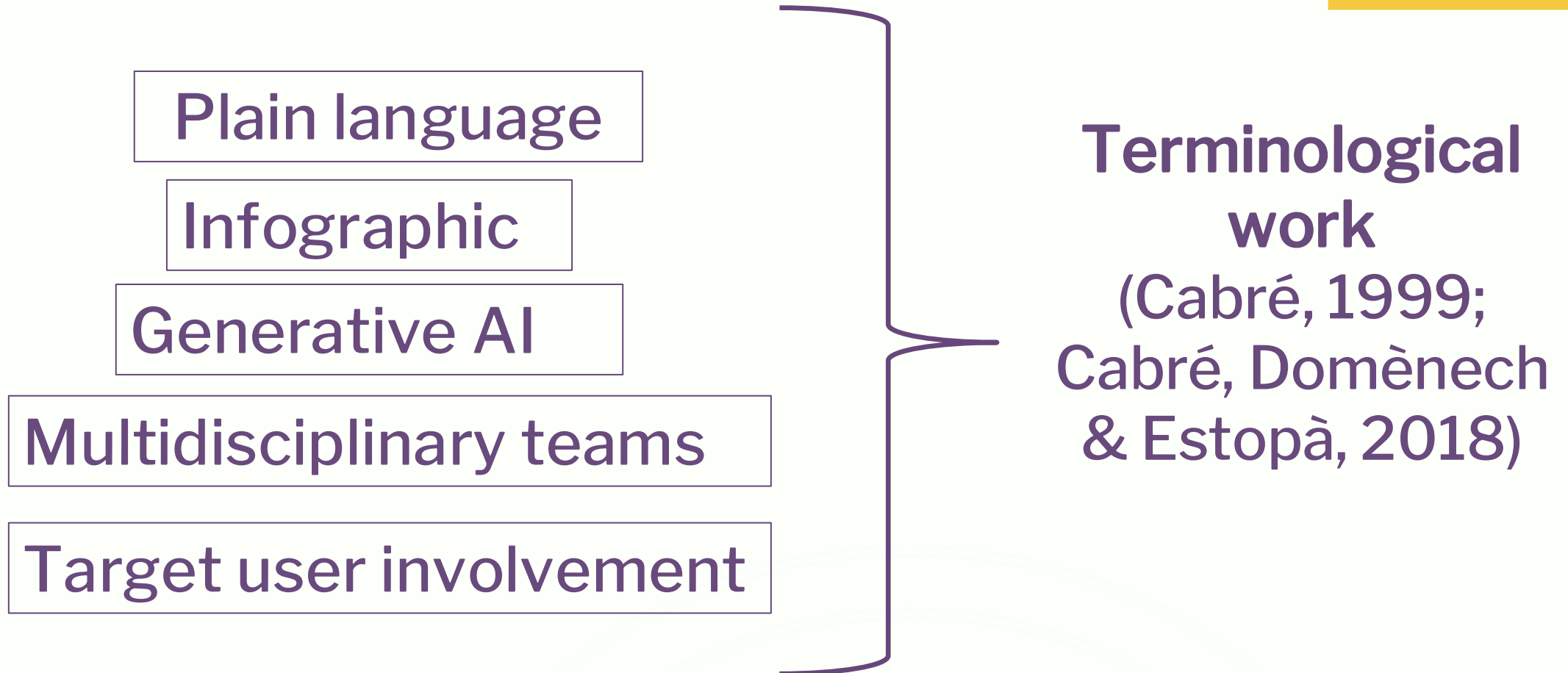
- **Non-specialists need access to healthcare knowledge** (Basagoiti, 2012)
- **Medical texts are highly specialized** (Cabré, 1999; Rudd et al., 2004; Estopà, 2020)
- **Terminology hinders effective communication** (Estopà & Montané, 2020).



How can we turn terminology from a barrier into a bridge?



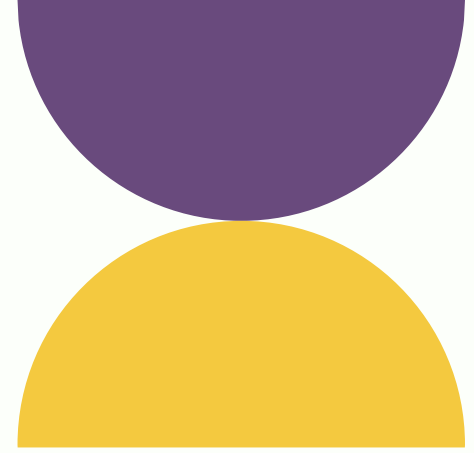
How can we turn terminology from a barrier into a bridge?



Some key concepts

In the **Communicative Theory of Terminology**, a term is studied as a linguistic, cognitive, and communicative unit that functions within specialised discourse.

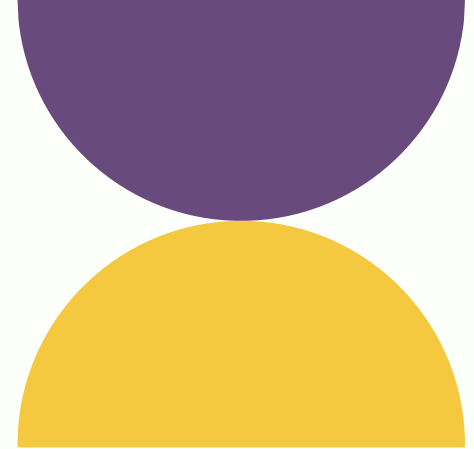
(Cabr , 1999)



Some key concepts

Terminological work is the set of activities involved in the analysis, description, organisation and representation of specialised knowledge through terms.

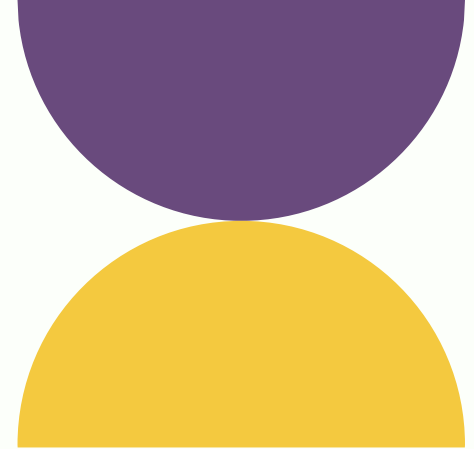
(Cabré, 1999)



Some key concepts

Terminological treatment refers to the use of linguistic and discursive strategies to represent and clarify the meaning of specialised terms, facilitating their comprehension by non-specialised users while preserving their specialised meaning.

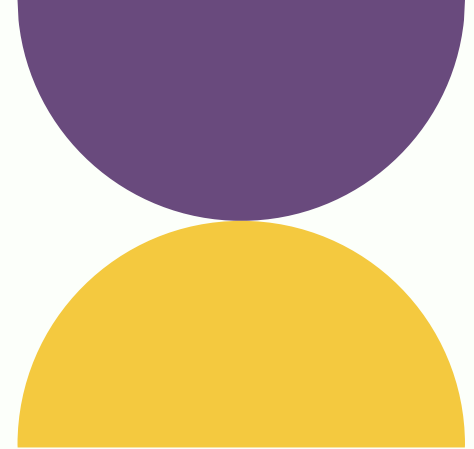
(Vidal-Sabanés y Estopà, 2025)



Some key concepts

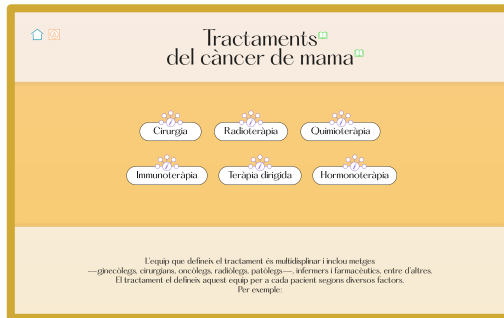
“A communication is in **plain language** if its **wording, structure, and design** are so clear that the intended readers can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use that information.”

International Plain language Federation, 2024



Two Terminological Resources

Breast cancer terminological infographic

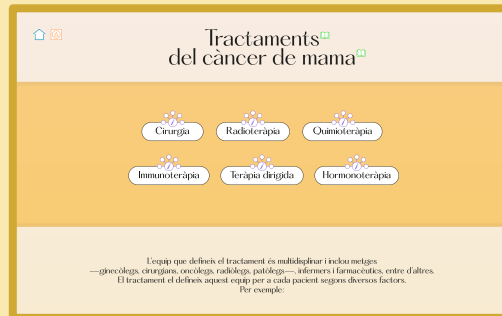


Plain Language Cardiology Glossary



Two Terminological Resources

Breast cancer terminological infographic



Plain Language Cardiology Glossary



Breast cancer terminological infographic

Funding and
institutional support



Target Audience: Breast cancer patients

Language: Catalan



Why an infographic?

GRAPHIC MEDICINE

comic

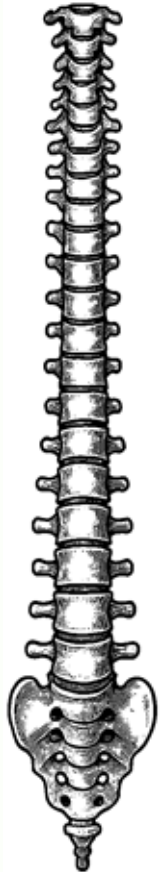
graphic
novel

infographic

- It is a text genre that simplifies and facilitates the understanding of complex texts
- It combines text and image in an inseparable way
- It presents information through a narrative

Why is it a terminological infographic?

TERMINOLOGY

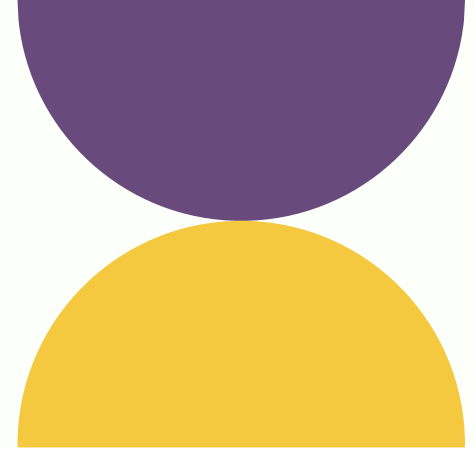


Terminological work
(Cabré, 1999; Cabré, Domènech
& Estopà, 2018)

+

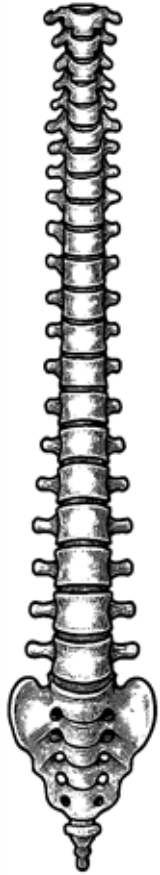
Design of infographics

Terminology treatment
through different strategies

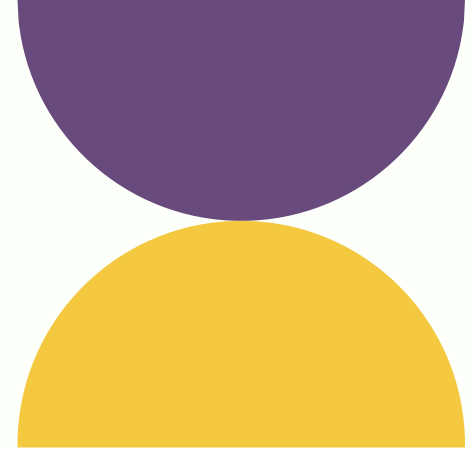
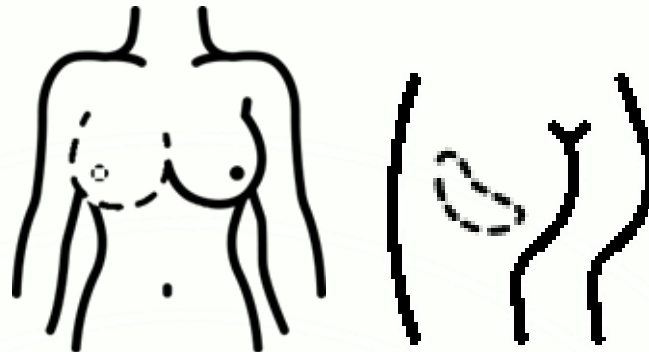


Terminology treatment through different strategies

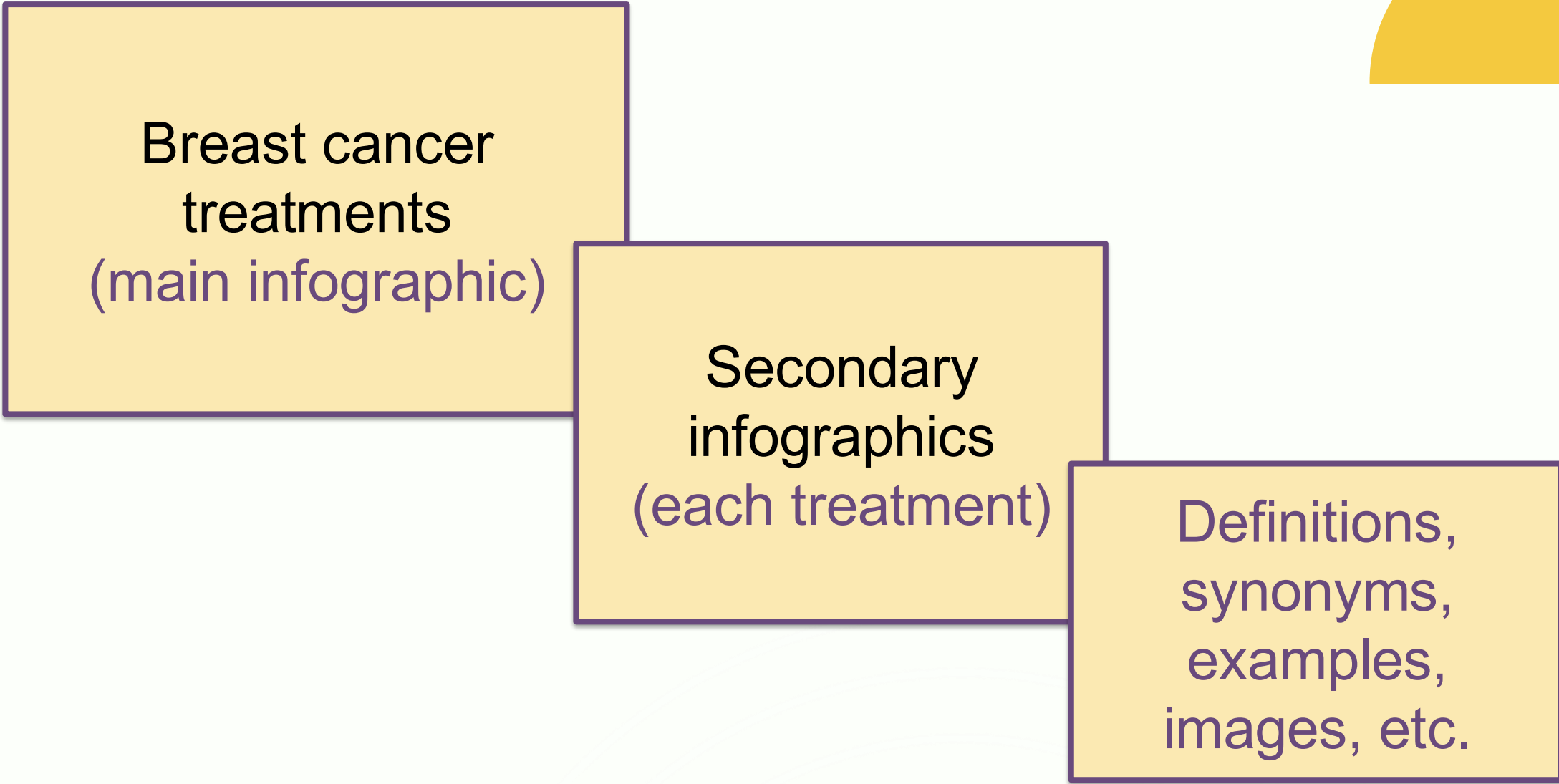
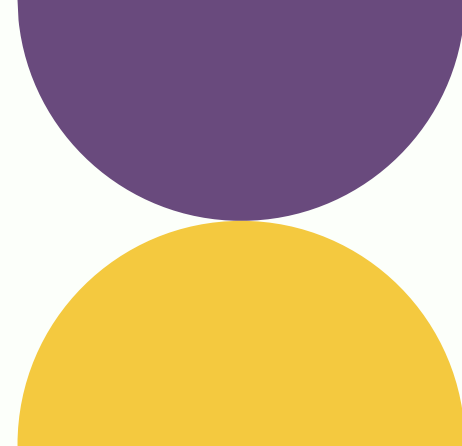
TERMINOLOGY



- 211 terms have an entry in the “dictionary” 
- Explained within the text
- Synonyms
- Examples
- Images



Multi-layered terminological infographic



Breast cancer
treatments
(main infographic)

Secondary
infographics
(each treatment)

Definitions,
synonyms,
examples,
images, etc.



Tractaments[📖] del càncer de mama[📖]



Cirurgia



Radioteràpia



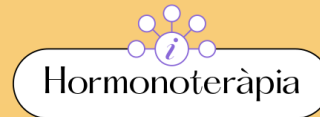
Quimioteràpia



Immunoteràpia



Teràpia dirigida



Hormonoteràpia

L'equip que defineix el tractament és multidisciplinar i inclou metges
—ginecòlegs, cirurgians, oncòlegs, radiòlegs, patòlegs—, infermers i farmacèutics, entre d'altres.
El tractament el defineix aquest equip per a cada pacient segons diversos factors.
Per exemple:

Per què i com s'administra la cirurgia?



Cirurgia conservadora 
(s'intervé **part de la mama**)

De cirurgia conservadora, en tenim tres tipus:



Tumorectomia



Quadrantectomia



Hemimastectomia



Mastectomia 
(s'intervé **tota la mama**)

Hi ha diferents tipus de mastectomia:



Mastectomia
simple 



Mastectomia
bilateral 



Mastectomia
radical 



Mastectomia
conservadora
de pell 



Mastectomia
conservadora
de pell i mugró


Per que i com s'administra la cirurgia?



Cirurgia conservadora 
(s'intervé **part de la mama**)

De cirurgia conservadora, en tenim tres tipus:



Tumorectomia



Quadrantectomia



Hemimastectomia



Mastectomia 
(s'intervé **tota la mama**)



tumorectomia

També s'utilitza:

tumorectomia amb marges
exèresi del tumor
lumpectomia

Cirurgia conservadora que consisteix en extirpar el tumor maligne i una mica del teixit que l'envolta. No s'extirpa tota la mama, perquè es vol conservar la quantitat més gran possible de teixit sa. L'objectiu és aconseguir extreure tot el teixit tumoral i un bon resultat estètic.



Mastectomia
conservadora
de pell 

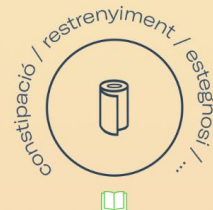


Mastectomia
conservadora
de pell i mugró


Quins efectes secundaris pot tenir la quimioteràpia?

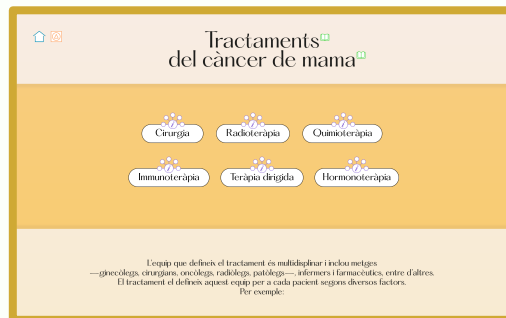
+ • -
DE MÉS A MENYS FREQUENTS

- QUÈ ÉS?
- PER QUÈ I QUAN S'ADMINISTRA?
- COM S'ADMINISTRA?
- QUINS FÀRMACS S'ADMINISTREN?
- QUINS EFECTES SECUNDARIS TÉ?



Two Terminological Resources

Breast cancer terminological infographic



Plain Language Cardiology Glossary



Plain Language Cardiology Glossary

Funding and
institutional support

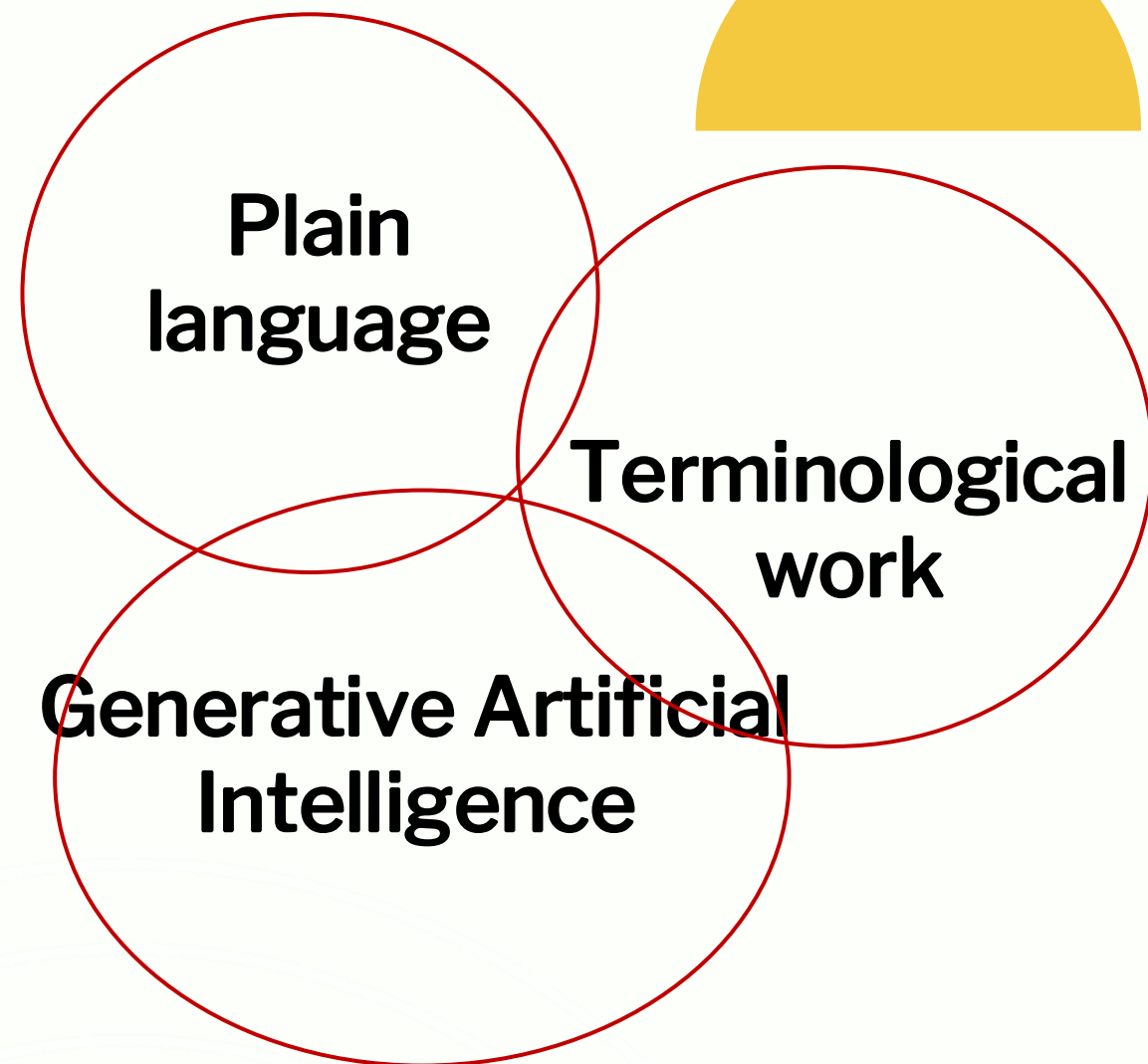


Target Audience: Patients with cardiovascular
diseases and their families

Language: Catalan

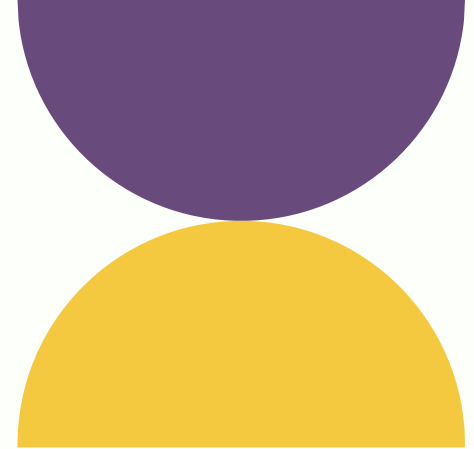
Our objective

To create a glossary of cardiology terms in Catalan and Spanish, including their clearer synonyms and definitions written in plain language.



Findings and current stage

- ✓ Contrastive analysis between a classic glossary created from the specialists' perspective, and results obtained with ChatGPT
- ✓ **Current focus:** Writing plain-language definitions and testing whether generative AI can produce accurate, clear and lexicographically sound ones
- ✓ **Next step:** Evaluation with patients to assess understanding



A (31) **B** (12) **C** (10) **D** (5) **E** (6) **F** (17) **G** (2) **H** (9) **I** (11) **J** (8)
K (1) **L** (32) **M** (14) **N** (5) **O** (6) **P** (5) **Q** (2) **R** (20) **S** (16) **T** (6)
U (21) **V** (11) **W** (2) **X** (4) **Y** (8) **Z** (5)

Quan el cor parla i el comprenem.
El llenguatge planer aplicat als termes
de la salut cardiovascular.

CERCA Q

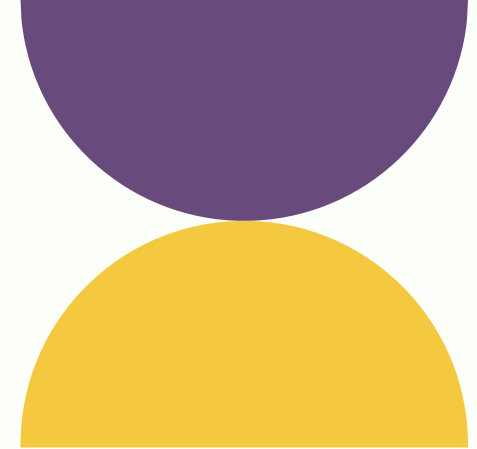
Escriu un terme...

INICI

EL PROJECTE

PARTS DEL COR





atac cardíac, **atac de cor**, IAM,
infart agut de miocardi, infart
de miocardi

DEFINICIÓ:

Lesió en una part del miocardi, el múscul del cor. Es produeix quan una artèria coronària es tapa amb un coàgul i la sang i l'oxigen no arriben al cor.

CERCA Q

Escriu un terme...

INICI

EL PROJECTE

PARTS DEL COR ●

For further information

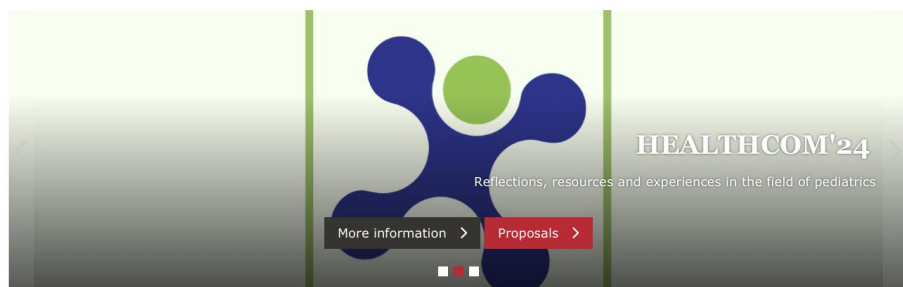
Vidal Sabanés, Laia; Estopà, Rosa (2025). «La terminología médica: de obstáculo de comprensión a puente de conocimiento a través de infografías». Traducción y humanidades médicas: narrativa gráfica y humanización en salud – *Mutatis Mutandis*.

Vidal-Sabanés, Laia; Da Cunha, Iria (2025). «AI as a resource for the clarification of medical terminology: an analysis of its advantages and limitations». *Terminology*, 31(1). 37–71

For further information

IULAMED PORTAL

IULAMED Portal



Since the 1990s, the [IULATERM research group \(Lexicon and Technology\)](#) of the [Institute for Applied Linguistics \(IULA-CER\)](#) has been working on the research track **Terminology of Medicine**, led by Dr Rosa Estopà.

The group has been interested in oral and written texts in the field of **Health Sciences**, has studied the communication, language and lexicon of medicine, synchronically and diachronically, has developed resources that revolve around medical terminology, and has the objective of making the communication between doctor and patient easier, as well as empowering the patient, be it an adult or a pediatric one.

The **IULAMED Portal: Language, Terminology and Health** brings together the research, resources and activities carried out in this interdisciplinary field of terminology, communication and clinical linguistics by IULATERM researchers, often in collaboration with researchers from other universities; from projects, resources and applications, publications, doctoral theses and master's theses, and scientific conferences, all the way to transferring knowledge to society through expositions and apps made for the patient.



Activities

Conferences, seminars and courses



Projects

Current and previous research projects



Publications

Papers, book chapters, dictionaries and books



Resources

Resources, applications and tools

Rosa Estopà

Translation ans Language Sciences

[Roc Boronat building \(Poblenou campus\)](#)

Roc Boronat, 138
08018 Barcelona

☎ (+34) 935 421 144

rosa.estopa@upf.edu

Related News

- [DIXIMED guardonat amb un accésit per l'Associació Catalana de Comunicació Científica \(ACCC\)](#)



- [Notícia sobre el](#)



From complexity to clarity: Terminology-based strategies for plain and patient-centered health communication”

Laia Vidal-Sabanés



UNIVERSITAT DE
BARCELONA



l.vidalsabanes@ub.edu

