

THE VOCABULARY FOR CMI - AN EXPLANATORY NOTE

The first edition of *Writing about Medicines for People: Usability Guidelines for Writing Consumer Product Information* was published in 1994 by the Communications Research Institute of Australia and contained a Glossary of switch terms which was intended to assist CPI (now CMI - Consumer Medicine Information) writers to interpret the complex medical terms used in Product Information.

With the revision of the Usability Guidelines and to coincide with the launch of the second edition, the Glossary has been broadened in concept and comprehensively reviewed in the light of almost four years experience of writing, testing and using CMI. To reflect the changes to the scope of the *Glossary*, it has been renamed *Vocabulary for Consumer Medicine Information (CMI)*.

The *Vocabulary for CMI* has been developed by a working group of medical physicians, industry representatives, CMI writers and a consumer representative. It is not intended to be a dictionary, since it does not provide the CMI writer with a set of definitions for medical terminology. Rather, it contains words and phrases which translate complex medical terms into words suitable for use in CMIs. Many of the terms in the *Vocabulary for CMI* have been taken from the 'core' CMIs developed by the different consistency working groups and have been subject to consumer testing. Many of the disease explanations have also been reviewed by a specialist in that field.

The *Vocabulary for CMI* aims to provide guidance and assistance to CMI writers, and its use is entirely voluntary. There are other approaches and explanatory terms which may be useful and more appropriate in a particular CMI. You are encouraged to use the *Vocabulary for CMI* to further consistency between CMIs, however, careful thought and consideration for the best way to express ideas in consumer-friendly language is still required.

How to use the Vocabulary:

- Italics: The use of italics indicates a simple explanation of a disease or condition for use in the section "What [Medicine name] is used for".
- Plain typeface: Terms given in plain typeface describe the symptoms that may be experienced by a consumer. These are to be used throughout the CMI, including the section "Side effects".
- Alternatives: A number of alternative explanations or descriptions are provided throughout the Vocabulary. These alternatives are interchangeable and you can select whichever you feel is most appropriate for a particular CMI.
- Testing: Although many of the terms in the Vocabulary have been tested with consumers, you will still need to test individual CMIs to ensure the document in its entirety is easy to use and understand.