

Editorial  
What's in a name?

- Day (n) i The time between the rising and setting of the sun.  
ii The time of one revolution of the earth (24 h).
- Ambulatory (n) Part of a building to walk in.  
(adj) Movable.

Do any of the above definitions of 'day' or 'ambulatory' qualify the word 'surgery' in such a way as to convey clearly the concept of surgery we wish to promote? Some will say yes, some no. Overall there will be no agreement. If those with a particular interest in this field of surgery have no clear consensual agreement on the terms that are used, how can we communicate in a meaningful way our ideas and the results of our research with others? We cannot. It is thus not for semantic reasons that we need to tightly define our terms: it is essential on both practical and scientific grounds.

The IAAS executive decided at its last meeting that ambulatory and day surgery, together with associated terminology, need to be defined on an internationally agreed basis.

This is a big task. But the process has been started by Mr L. Roberts and Dr J. Warden, two of IAAS's Australian delegates. Their initial proposals follow this editorial. Readers comments on these definitions and suggestions for other terms that need defining would be welcome.

The present imprecise usage of terminology is confusing. Clarification is essential if national and international comparisons are to be made and progress occur in what we term Ambulatory or Day Surgery.

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