

4.5. Primitive and fully-defined Concepts

A **Concept** is considered to be **fully defined** if its **defining characteristics** are sufficient to define it relative to its immediate supertype(s). A **Concept** which is not **fully defined** is **Primitive** and this is indicated by the value of the **definitionStatusId** field.

Example: 233604007 |Pneumonia| is a lung disease but unless **defining characteristics** are specified that effectively distinguish 233604007 |pneumonia| from other lung diseases then it is regarded as a **primitive Concept**.

If a **Concept** is **primitive** then the **defining characteristics** for that **Concept** are incomplete. It is not possible to automatically compute that a **Concept** represented as a **postcoordinated** combination of several **Concepts** is or is not a **subtype** of a particular **primitive Concept**.

Example: The **Concept** "lung disease" qualified by 246075003 |causative agent| = 41146007 |bacteria| may be 233604007 |pneumonia| but could also be "bronchitis."

In contrast if a **Concept** is **fully defined** it is possible to state that any **Concept** represented as a combination of the same **defining characteristics** is equivalent to or a **subtype** of that **Concept**.

Example: Assume that the **Concept** 53084003 |bacterial pneumonia| is **fully defined** as 312342009 |infective pneumonia| with 246075003 |causative agent| = 41146007 |bacteria| and that 9861002 |pneumococcus| is a 41146007 |bacteria|. It then follows that the post coordinated representation of 233607000 |pneumococcal pneumonia| as 312342009 |infective pneumonia| with 246075003 |causative agent| = 9861002 |pneumococcus| is computably a **subtype** of |bacterial pneumonia|.