

4.4. Qualifiers and refinement

Qualifiers and refinable definitions

A **qualifying characteristic** is an attribute that may have one of several possible values for a particular **Concept**. If a particular **qualifier** is applied to a **Concept**, the resulting **expression** represents a more tightly defined **subtype** of that **Concept**.

Example: It might be possible to qualify a disorder such as 53084003 |bacterial pneumonia| according to its clinical course (53737009 |acute| or 90734009 |chronic|) or severity ("mild," "moderate" or 24484000 |severe|). With appropriate **qualifiers**, "injury of skin of the left side of face" could then be represented even if a single **Concept Identifier** cannot express this.

A similar tightening of the definition of a **Concept** can be achieved by allowing one or more of the **defining characteristics** associated with a **Concept** to be refined. A **defining characteristic** is refined by an **expression** that applies a specified **subtype** of the value stated in the definition.

Example: 125605004 |Fracture of bone| could be refined by qualifying it with the finding site "tibia" to represent the **Concept** 31978002 |Fracture of tibia|.