

Table 1
Variations in minimal clinically important difference terminology in published literature

Term (Acronym)^a	Definitions and/or Common Applications
Minimal clinically important difference (MCID)	Term discussed by Guyatt and colleagues ⁴⁹ in 1987; Jaeschke and colleagues ⁶ in 1989 proposed MCID definition and initial methods. Wells and colleagues ¹² in their review found MCID terminology to often be linked to important change based on patient viewpoint (perception).
Minimal important difference (MID)	Currently becoming the dominant terminology in literature (although MCID is still used). MID omits the “clinical” of MCID, where the anchor being used in the derivation of the change is not based on clinical judgment (eg, perceptions of clinicians or patients described in earlier MCID literature). ⁵⁰ Therefore, MID could also be based on a change in a laboratory marker or a functional test such as pulmonary function test or 5-min walking test. Change in definition also expanded to include directions of beneficial and harmful important change. ⁵⁰
Minimal important change (MIC)	Used to emphasize a difference in terminology wherein “change” is longitudinal change within individuals and “difference” is cross-section differences between groups. ³ MIC is a change a patient considers important and therefore should be determined using patient-perspective anchor-based methods. ^{39,41}
Subjectively significant difference (SSD)	Introduced by Osoba and colleagues ⁵¹ in 1998 to emphasize patient-centered anchors.
Clinically important difference (CID)	CID reflects clinically important change that is not necessarily minimal. ²⁹ The term is also used in contrast to Clinically important responder (CIR), where CID is the between-group difference considered clinically relevant (ie, as applied to a clinical intervention trial). ¹⁸
Clinically important responder (CIR)	Amount of change an individual needs to report to consider they have experienced a meaningful improvement. ¹⁸ Terminology proposed to align more with patient-reported outcome measure development guidelines. ^{18,32}
MDC (minimal detectable change)	The amount of individual change needed to be achieved to differentiate from measurement error (random variation); argued that should not be a replacement for important change. ^{11,27,39,41}

^a Also see King’s 2011 review for evolution and nuances of MCID terminology.⁹