

# Value Proposition for SNOMED CT

SNOMED CT (Systematized Nomenclature of Medicine-Clinical Terms) is considered to be the most comprehensive, multilingual clinical healthcare terminology in the world. Each year, avoidable deaths and injuries occur because of poor communication between healthcare practitioners, or because busy practitioners forget or neglect to follow their own criteria for best practices. The delivery of a standard clinical terminology for use across the world's health information systems can therefore make a significant contribution towards improving the quality and safety of healthcare.

SNOMED CT aims to contribute to the improvement of patient care through underpinning the development of systems to accurately record health care encounters and to deliver decision support to health care providers. Ultimately, patients will benefit from the use of SNOMED CT to more clearly describe and accurately record their care, in building and facilitating better communication and interoperability in electronic health record exchange, and in creating systems that support health care decision making.

Benefits of using SNOMED CT are identified below in four categories:

- General benefits of SNOMED CT
- Operational Use
- Secondary Use
- Distribution of Information

## General Benefits of SNOMED CT

- SNOMED CT is an International standard, has multilingual support and enables the provision of a platform independent, cross-cultural, health care record.
- SNOMED CT Provides a consistent terminology across all health care domains. This allows clinicians to communicate effectively and accurately across clinical domains and over the lifetime of a patient record.
- SNOMED CT allows precise recording of clinical information. By using many descriptions for a single clinical concept it allows tailoring for individual care settings whilst maintaining consistency.
- SNOMED CT has an inherent structure. This provides for an unambiguous description of an individual concept in a logical way and allows application of logical processing and machine reasoning of clinical information.
- SNOMED CT can be extended in a controlled fashion to further enhance its usability and coverage.
- The recording of clinical data through SNOMED CT enables the consistent retrieval, transmission and analysis of data from patient records across healthcare systems.
- SNOMED CT is well maintained and updated in collaboration with subject matter experts to represent current clinical knowledge

## Operational Use

- SNOMED CT enables the capture of clinical information at a level of detail appropriate for the provision of healthcare.
- SNOMED CT enables patient data to be recorded by different people in different locations, and to be combined into simple information views within the patient record. This enables the continuity of care across different care settings and locations.
- The consistent use of SNOMED CT reduces the risk of differing and incorrect interpretation of data in healthcare records by reducing the implicit contextual meaning associated with entered data.
- Appropriate use of SNOMED CT can contribute to the reduction of error rates and can help ensure the comprehensive recording of relevant data.
- Through sharing data it can dramatically reduce the need to repeat health history at each new encounter with a healthcare professional.
- SNOMED CT enables efficient searching of patient records and retrieval of relevant clinical information.
- SNOMED CT facilitates point of care decision support, automatic identification of patient risk factors, and monitoring of response to treatment and adverse reactions to treatment. Using SNOMED CT to encode clinical information in the patient record, computers can assist the decisions made by healthcare professionals by providing contextually relevant information at the point of care, or by providing automated alerts, reminders or checks.
- SNOMED CT can assist with identification of patients who match a given set of clinical criteria. For example, those who are eligible for a particular screening programme, or a clinical trial, can be identified, and patients who are at a high risk of developing a given disease can be detected.
- SNOMED CT improves clinical efficiency by providing a standard clinically relevant terminology to the clinician for documentation of care
- SNOMED CT's history mechanism enables clinical information collected over time to be meaningfully correlated together

## Secondary Use

- SNOMED CT can assist with public health monitoring. Encoding clinical information allows for the monitoring of diseases and disease trends at a population level. The more usable clinical information that is available, the easier it will be to tackle health issues or manage disease outbreaks.

- SNOMED CT enables the analysis of outcomes. There is an increasing focus on evidence based medicine in clinical practice today, but little usable information to base that evidence on. Consistent use of SNOMED CT to code information in patient records will provide an improved information base to support outcome analysis.
- SNOMED CT can also facilitate performance analysis. As medicine moves towards evidence bases, fitness to practice and clinical revalidation are similarly moving towards performance related measures. SNOMED CT can provide a consistent basis for evaluation.
- SNOMED CT enables the easier, more effective analysis of data.
- SNOMED CT will enable the provision of large populations of consistent data for medical research.
- SNOMED CT can facilitate process improvement activities by more consistent and accurate documentation of clinical events and activities and linking these to process measurements and timeliness of delivery of care.

## **Distribution of information**

- SNOMED CT can be used for the sharing and consistent distribution of outcome analysis data. For example, SNOMED CT can be used to analyse how many cancer surgeries are performed and to consistently record outcome data to determine whether surgery has an impact on long-term survival and local recurrence in cancer treatments. This type of outcome analysis will be invaluable once an evidence base is built up. If outcome data like this can be represented consistently using SNOMED CT, then a much wider pool of International data could be used to compare treatments both within and across countries, with resulting improvements in best practice.
- SNOMED CT can be used to setup and distribute decision support information in a consistent way.
- SNOMED CT can facilitate knowledge management through its standard terminology and the reference information embedded within. For example, SNOMED CT hierarchy can be used to aggregate similar kinds of information and knowledge together.