



Medicines terminology – SNOMED CT

A meeting was held in Brisbane, August 22, 2007 to consider future directions for medicines terminology in SNOMED CT. The group identified a number of stakeholders and relevant standards, listed and compared a number of use cases, and received presentations reviewing relevant experiences to date and requirements for harmonization of medicines terminology.

Discussion led to the following vision statement:

SNOMED CT will improve and support its terminology for drugs and pharmaceuticals in order to:

- 1) Be genuinely useful and used in delivering better health care to people,
- 2) Support the representation of drugs, with a perspective close to the patient.

Work to make the terminology useful and used will focus on the following use cases:

- prescription,
- administration,
- dispensing,
- recording (medication list),
- names and codes needed to enable decision support, and
- drug classes for allergies and adverse reactions.

Other use cases that have been intentionally left off the initial list include surveillance, regulation, clinical trials, supply chain management, stock and supply, and purchasing.

The group felt strongly that the IHTSDO should have a Pharmacy Special Interest Group, which was their first recommendation.

They also identified several high priority and immediate term tasks for projects [and hence project groups]. These recommendations are:

- 1) Development of naming conventions & editorial rules for fully specified names of drug products
- 2) Definition of the boundary of the international release with national extensions
- 3) Specification of a technical approach to eliminating “is-a overloading” and associated errors in the product and substance hierarchies, with implementation to follow as soon as possible
- 4) Design of a new approach to representing and supporting allergy classes, with implementation as soon as possible

Finally the third recommendation was an innovatory piece of work to begin on the development of a model of how SNOMED CT international release relates to all the other terminologies in the drug area.