Editorial Principles and SNOMED CT

June 2016
Introduction

• When new concepts are developed to be included in SNOMED CT, guidelines ensure that we use a consistent approach to the way we phrase the terms for new concepts.

• These guidelines are agreed both internationally for the core of SNOMED CT and at a UK level for the concepts in the UK Extension

• We call these *Editorial Principles*
Editorial Principles

Requirement for Editorial Principles
• Details the standards on which to base clinical authoring to achieve consistency and reduce ambiguity across the terms
• Ensures authoring processes are transparent and understandable

SNOMED CT Editorial Principles
• Explains the content and the principles used to author and edit the terminology
• Provides International and UK specific guidance
• UK Editorial Principles assured by UKTC Edition Committee
• More information on Editorial Guide on the IHTSDO website
Basis for Adding New Clinical Content

Content in SNOMED CT must be:
- Understandable
- Reproducible
- Useful
- Unambiguous

Content that won’t be considered includes:
- Abbreviations alone unless agreed via the Editorial Committee
- Local terms and representations
- Terms that do not relate to the patient
Authoring Concepts

Concepts are authored:

- In the SNOMED CT International Edition – these requirements come from any country that is a member of the IHTSDO

- By the UK Terminology Centre (UKTC) in the UK Extension – this includes UK English replacements of terms with US English, as well as concepts that are needed specifically by the UK

- The UK Edition available for download is a combination of International Edition and UK concepts and specific terms
Authoring Process

• How UKTC receive requests for addition/change
• UKTC review of requests and authoring process
• Authoring Quality Assurance
• Escalation process
• Governance
Requests for change are managed in the UK by the UKTC, the national release centre for the UK.

We receive requests from the home countries within the UK via their national centres:

- England, Wales and Northern Ireland via [UKTC SNOMED CT Submission Portal](#)
- Scotland: From [ISD Terminology Services](#) via the UKTC SNOMED CT submission portal
How we Receive Requests for Content Change or Addition (2/2)

• We can receive requests direct from users if appropriate
• Users must register and then can submit requests for addition / change to the UKTC
• After registration log into the Request Submission Portal and choose the SNOMED CT Product
• Help information is provided as you make your request by hovering over the ? icons as you progress
• Other requests can be searched even when not logged in
How a Request is Reviewed

• Duplication of content is prevented by checking that alternative representation of the request doesn’t already exist in the terminology.

• Checks are made that the request is unambiguous and there is enough detail for the term to be authored.

• It is helpful to attach any relevant documents to support your request.

• The term is assessed for its suitability and that it is in scope for addition to the national clinical terminology.

• The format of the concept and its terms authored follow the Editorial Principles.
Authoring the Concept

- The context of the term is ascertained and Editorial Principles applied
  - Is it a clinical finding or
  - Is it a procedure?

  ... to name just two hierarchies

- The author creates an unambiguous representation of the request made
The Context of Meaning for a Concept

The following applies unless explicitly stated otherwise:

For a ‘clinical finding’ that:
• The concept represents the result of a clinical observation, assessment or judgment, and includes both normal and abnormal clinical states
• It relates to the patient

For a ‘procedure’ that:
• The concept represents activities performed in the provision of healthcare
• It was performed on/related to the patient (e.g. a patient sample)
Some Further Editorial Principles Examples

- Each concept has one *Preferred Term* which is a common word or phrase used by clinicians to name that concept.
- In general, terms are represented in the singular rather than the plural where appropriate.
- A hyphen is a punctuation mark used to join words and to separate syllables. There should be no spaces either before or after the hyphen e.g. intra-articular.
- Names that are derived from a proper name e.g. Down Syndrome, should avoid apostrophes wherever possible, although a synonym with the apostrophe can be added.
The Quality Assurance Process

After authoring the new addition/change the following occur:

• Inspection by a minimum of 2 independent authors
• Quality Assurance review meetings to resolve any issues
• An escalation policy exists where issues are not resolved via the Quality Assurance meeting
• Technical Quality Assurance before release
The Escalation Process

Can be used by authors or the requestor where content issues cannot be resolved:

- Where a request is rejected by the UKTC the requestor can appeal
- As escalation in the quality assurance process if required

All the above are controlled by the SNOMED CT UKTC Governance Process

Appeals / terminology enquires should be sent to information.standards@hscic.gov.uk
More information about this diagram can be found at:
http://systems.hscic.gov.uk/data/uktc/snomed/governance
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- enquiries@hscic.gov.uk
- 0300 303 5678
- @hscic
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