

Briefing Note for the Member Forum, Content Managers Advisory Group, and Clinical Leads

April 2024

Inactivation of the Navigational Concept hierarchy

Purpose

The purpose of this briefing note is to inform the SNOMED International Community of Practice and select Advisory Groups and Project Groups of the intention to inactivate the Navigational concept hierarchy (<<363743006 |Navigational concept (navigational concept)|) which consists of 634 concepts that have been placed in this hierarchy due to their inability to be defined or to present a universally understood meaning, thus violating the Understandability, Reproducibility, and Useability standards for SNOMED CT.

Background

This issue was brought to light during a discussion at the Modeling Advisory Group meeting in September 2022 as part of a discussion related to the impact of semantic tags on the MRCM. It was suggested that the Navigational concept hierarchy be inactivated, due to the fact that while it is stated in the SNOMED International Editorial Guide that these concepts are no longer supported in the International release and are not suitable for data recording or aggregation of data, they are being used in some implementations in place of more suitable Clinical findings, Record artifacts, etc.

The current SNOMED Editorial Guide states, "Navigational concepts were created to group other concepts without explicit regard for defining attributes (since there were none). Their purpose was to provide top level groupers for subsets and reference sets used in implementations. Because the Reference Set mechanism is now available, there is no longer a need for navigational concepts in the International Release; however, they can be added at the national or lower level."

A key challenge is that additional effort is needed by implementers to produce hierarchical relationships under these groupers. This is also the key criticism of the lack of relationships that cannot be fulfilled by the navigational concepts.

Issues

There are a number of Navigational concepts that are currently in high use in the UK and would require suitable replacements to ensure data traceability. The table below lists the affected concepts and the proposed replacement values.

CONCEPTID	Fully Specified Name	Inactivation reason	Replacement
394617004	Result (navigational concept)	Nonconformance to editorial policy	423100009 Results section (record artifact)
160237006	History/symptoms (navigational concept)	Ambiguous	1003642006 Past medical history section (record artifact) 422625006 History of present illness section (record artifact)
309157004	Normal laboratory finding (navigational concept)	Nonconformance with editorial policy	442082004 Measurement finding within reference range (finding)
267368005	Endocrine, nutritional, metabolic and immunity disorders (navigational concept)	Ambiguous	362969004 Disorder of endocrine system (disorder) 2492009 Nutritional disorder (disorder) 75934005 Metabolic disease (disorder) 414029004 Disorder of immune function (disorder)
243800003	Test categorized by action status (navigational concept)	Non-conformance to editorial policy	No replacement
250541005	Biochemical finding (navigational concept)	Non-conformance to editorial policy	Recommend: New extension concept
309230008	Borderline laboratory finding (navigational concept)	Non-conformance to editorial policy	Recommend: New extension concept
309158009	Laboratory finding abnormal (navigational concept)	Non-conformance to editorial policy	442096005 Measurement finding outside reference range (finding)
118246004	Laboratory test finding (navigational concept)	Ambiguous	118245000 Measurement finding (finding) 441742003 Evaluation finding (finding)
282465005	Physiological functions and activities (navigational concept)	Non-conformance to editorial policy	1184588000 Functional status document section (record artifact)
165347009	Laboratory test result borderline (navigational concept)	Non-conformance to editorial policy	Recommend: New extension concept
309159001	Normal hematology finding (navigational concept)	Non-conformance to editorial policy	Recommend: New extension concept
250207003	Hematology finding (navigational concept)	Non-conformance to editorial policy	4321000179101 Hematology report (record artifact)
370121008	Disorder of blood / lymphatics / immune system (navigational concept)	Ambiguous	414029004 Disorder of immune function (disorder)

			3305006 Disorder of lymphatic vessel (disorder) 414022008 Disorder of cellular component of blood (disorder)
309194008	Hematology finding abnormal (navigational concept)	Nonconformance to editorial policy	34641000087106 Hematology test outside reference range (finding)
276437003	Skin, hair and nail finding (navigational concept)	Nonconformance to editorial policy	106077005 Integumentary system finding (finding)
243798005	Procedure categorized by action status (navigational concept)	Non-conformance to editorial policy	No replacement

Next Steps

1. Solicit input from the membership and Community of Practice on the impact that inactivation of the Navigational concept hierarchy would have on their implementations.
2. For those concepts with high usage in the table above and are suitable for the International release, identify suitable replacement concepts and encourage migration of existing implementations to these new concepts.
3. For those concepts with high usage that are not suitable for the International release, encourage extensions to create replacement concepts in their extension.
3. Notify the Community of Practice that the Navigational concept hierarchy will be inactivated without replacement (aside from the exceptions noted above) in the second quarter of 2024.

Recommendations

The SNOMED Editorial Advisory Group has reviewed and agreed with this proposal. The recommendation is to utilize the refset mechanism as a means for grouping concepts to fulfill specific requirements. Alternatively, if the meaning is clear for a national extension, navigational/organizing concepts can be added to the extension.

Comments may be sent to Jim Case (jca@snomed.org) by May 31, 2024

Approvals	Date	Name
Chief Terminologist	December 13,2023	James T. Case
Director of Content and Mapping	December 13, 2023	Monica Harry



CSR Representative	December 13, 2023	Jane Millar
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James T. Case, 2023-12-13