Granularity

The scale, or level of detail, in a terminology is called **granularity**. Concepts and meanings range from very general, or coarse, to very specific, or fine. **SNOMED CT** has multiple granularities, which is an important component of terminologies that are multi-purpose. The broader meanings are useful for aggregation (e.g. Clinical Finding, Procedure, etc.), but are not intended for recording individual patient data.

The progressive levels of refinement are used to meet clinical data requirements. There are, however, limits to the degree of precoordination of certain types of complex statements.

In general, concepts in **SNOMED CT** should name things that exist in the real world. The concepts are usually names or short noun phrases, not complete sentences or paragraphs.

**SNOMED CT** is intended to be used with electronic health applications that can support full clinical statements, along with their attributions, dates, times, and statement interrelationships. It may be challenging to balance **SNOMED CT** content with the needs of those using electronic health applications. For example, some older applications may require concepts outside of the scope of **SNOMED CT**. **SNOMED CT** tries to maximize its usefulness and at the same time minimize precoordination.