

User Communities

Language

The terms required by users of a clinical terminology vary according to the local languages and dialects.

- When using a terminology, users must see terms in a language and dialect with which they are familiar. The terms must be clear and unambiguous independent of any hierarchical context or formal definition.
- The display of terms must not be confused by inclusion of terms in other languages or dialects.
- The terms used in different languages and dialects are not mutually exclusive. A term may be common to several languages or dialects of a language.
- When a code is presented without a specific reference to a term, an appropriate preferred term should be displayed. A term may be a preferred term in one dialect and a synonym in another.

Some terms differ only in spelling conventions (e.g. color vs. colour). The same spelling variants may recur in many different terms.

- It may be appropriate to recognize these cases and handle them differently from other term variants.

An individual instantiation of an application may only require access to a single language or dialect. It is inappropriate to install and maintain all language and dialect variants.

An application may need to support several languages with the ability to switch between languages and dialects in real-time to meet the needs of users.

Specialty

Some specialties or disciplines prefer to use different terms to describe the same meaning. A particular specialist may use a precise term, while a generalist may use a different term to describe the same condition.

Use of terms

The following table lists factors affecting term use and examples of each.

Factors affecting term use	
Factor	Examples
Geographic and seasonal differences	Malaria is more common in certain regions Hay fever is more common in spring, summer, and fall
Cultural perceptions of health	Acceptance of alternative therapies
Discipline or specialty	Obstetricians use <i>fundus</i> to mean <i>fundus of the uterus</i> ; gastroenterologists use the same term to mean <i>fundus of the stomach</i> Surgeons record operative procedures relevant to their specialties
Professional criteria	The definition of hypertension may vary based on professional guidelines
National or organizational requirements, including those for administrative or funding purposes	Performance measure results affecting reimbursement
Topics of special interest to individual clinicians	Infectious disease specialist with an interest in tropical diseases

Organization, country, and user

Particular terms may be specific to an organization. They may not be included in the International Release of SNOMED CT. Organizations and users must be able to add terms or codes to SNOMED CT, without devaluing the main body of SNOMED CT.

It may be necessary to combine several subsets and extensions to meet the needs of a country, an organization, or a specialty. There must be consistent rules for combining subsets and extensions.

The requirements of a particular user may change according to the role they are performing. A single instance of an application may need to support different requirements of several users.