

2.2 Benefits of SNOMED CT

Many of the benefits of SNOMED CT arise from key features of the terminology described in the previous section including global reach, broad clinical scope, logic based design, extensibility and configurability to support language and other national, regional or organizational requirements.

It is widely recognized that use of an Electronic Health Record (EHR) improves communication and increases the availability of relevant information. The added-value of storing and communicating this information using SNOMED CT to represent clinical information is that this enables meaning-based retrieval. The benefits arising from this range from increased opportunities for real time decision support to more accurate retrospective reporting for research and management.

Use of SNOMED CT Benefits Individuals

SNOMED CT enabled clinical health records benefit individuals by:

- Enabling relevant clinical information to be recorded using consistent, common representations during a consultation.
- Enabling guideline and decision support systems to check the record and provide real-time advice, for example, through clinical alerts.
- Supporting the sharing of appropriate information with others involved in delivering care to a patient through data capture that allows understanding and interpretation of the information in a common way by all providers.
- Allowing accurate and comprehensive searches that identify patients who require follow-up or changes of treatment based on revised guidelines.
- Removing language barriers (SNOMED CT enables multilingual use).

Use of SNOMED CT Benefit Populations

SNOMED CT enabled clinical health records benefit populations by:

- Facilitating early identification of emerging health issues, monitoring of population health and responses to changing clinical practices.
- Enabling accurate and targeted access to relevant information, reducing costly duplications and errors.
- Enabling the delivery of relevant data to support clinical research and contribute evidence for future improvements in treatment.
- Enhancing audits of care delivery with options for detailed analysis of clinical records to investigate outliers and exceptions.

Use of SNOMED CT Supports Evidence-Based Healthcare

SNOMED CT enabled health records inform evidence based health care decisions by:

- Enabling links between clinical records and enhanced clinical guidelines and protocols.
- Enhancing the quality of care experienced by individuals.
- Reducing costs of inappropriate and duplicative testing and treatment.
- Limiting the frequency and impact of adverse healthcare events.
- Raising the cost-effectiveness and quality of care delivered to populations.