2. Subsets, Value Sets and Reference Sets

In this section, we define some important terms that are used throughout this guide. In particular, *subset*, *value set* and *reference set*.

Subset and *value set* are general terms that are not specific to SNOMED CT. However, it is important to understand what they mean, and how they relate to SNOMED CT *reference sets*.

In summary:

- A subset is a set of members all of which are members of another set (from *set theory* in mathematics).

- A value set is a uniquely identifiable set of valid concept representations, where any concept representation can be tested to determine whether or not it is a member of the *value set*.

- A reference set is a standard format for maintaining and distributing a set of references to SNOMED CT components.

In the following subsections, we describe each of these terms in more detail.