SNOMED International Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Initial SNOMED response

Initial actions beginning late January 2020:

- SNOMED International contacted by several affiliates for content related to “Novel coronavirus disease”
  - Desire for content to be included in the Jan 2020 International release
  - This was one week prior to the official release and nearly two months after the official close of editing.
- Initial set of terms related to both the virus and the disease were created and quality assured based on input from affiliates.
  - Seven concepts added to the Jan 2020 release
  - Naming was based on current knowledge (2019-nCoV, Wuhan coronavirus)
- Entire SNOMED CT release process was rerun and the International edition was released on schedule, Jan 31, 2020
Rapidly changing circumstances

- On February 11, 2020, the WHO renamed the disease “COVID-19”
- Also on February 11, 2020, the WHO emphasized guidelines to remove references to geographic regions, persons or nationalities from named disorders
- On March 2, 2020, the Coronaviridae Study Group of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses published a consensus statement naming the virus “Severe acute respiratory syndrome-related virus 2”, or “SARS-CoV-2”
- Content changes to the SNOMED CT International content was made to reflect this guidance and internal discussion begun regarding an interim release of the content for immediate use.
- It was decided by SNOMED leadership that the urgent need for up-to-date content warranted a “Special release” of SNOMED CT
March 2020 Urgent International Edition Release

• Content refinements
  • Improved COVID-19 Descriptions to align with International naming standards and supporting components authored urgently
  • Content Reviewed and Quality Assured by senior terminologists
  • ICD-10 Map records mapped and reviewed in line with COVID-19 content

• Release planning
  • Multiple iterations of discussions with Terminology Release Advisory Group + other community members took place, in order to agree on the format of interim Release package, and on the approach to communication and support for all end users
  • Relevant governance bodies made aware with opportunities for feedback
  • Planning carried out with the future migration to Continuous Delivery in mind, by ensuring that all decisions made enabled this interim release to act as a trial for that transition

• Technical build, assurance and distribution
  • Updated content packaged into the agreed format, and tested thoroughly using automation
  • The usual multitude of manual tests were prioritised, and all critical technical and content validation was performed before the Release was published
  • Communications sent in advance and after publication, to educate and support all users
Terminology release follow-up

Communication


Access

• A special web page was created to provide ready access to the new COVID-19 content (http://snomed.org/COVID-19)

  • Available for immediate use and can be used under the same open license as the GPS, the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License
  • Formally published September 2020
Thank you!

Please contact James T. Case, jca@snomed.org for further information.