

SNOMED CT pioneers – the New South Wales experience

By Joanne Chicco and Graham Pegler

Since 2008, NSW has been collecting diagnoses in Emergency Departments using SNOMED CT. This paper will outline the reasons for this decision, how the implementation occurred as part of our Electronic Medical Record (EMR) rollout, the outcomes of using SNOMED CT to collect diagnoses and our plans for the future. We will discuss the development of the NSW Emergency Department Termset and its relationship to NEHTA's Emergency Department Reference Set (EDRS), plus our contribution to the international development of SNOMED CT content. We will outline issues that have arisen, the positive benefits and relationships we have formed, what we would do differently next time, and the hard lessons we have learned.

Biographies

Joanne Chicco

Joanne completed a Bachelor of Applied Science (Medical Record Administration) in 1987 and from 1986 – 1996 worked as a Health Information Manager in a number of public and private hospitals in Sydney. She completed a Master of Business Administration from the University of Technology Sydney in 1997. After leaving the hospital sector, she worked as Quality Manager at the National Centre for Classification in Health, and as TrendStar product specialist with CSC. In 1998 Joanne began work as the Senior Consultant Clinical Data at the NSW Health Department. She held this role until 2005, when she transferred to the Strategic Information Management branch within NSW Health to work as a Business Analyst on the Electronic Health Record and Electronic Medical Record projects. In October of 2007 Joanne was transferred to the Demand and Performance Evaluation Branch to concentrate on the management of metadata and the introduction and impact of SNOMED CT within clinical systems. For most of 2010 she has been concentrating on being HERO operations manager.

Graham Pegler

Graham joined NSW Health in 1994 from the NSW Department of Education, as a project officer supporting the development and implementation of an enterprise information strategy comprising data warehousing, data standards and information models. He is currently Associate Director Informatics for NSW Health and has had considerable experience in managing data standardisation efforts within NSW Health; in providing input to and representing NSW Health on National Standards bodies; and in providing tangible, practical support to the development and implementation of SNOMED CT in information systems and for data analysis. He is co-chair of the Australian Clinical Terminologies User Group and currently the NSW Representative on the Clinical Terminology and Information Reference Group.