

Health informatics — Categorial structures for systems of concepts

The European Standard EN 12264:2005 has the status of a
British Standard

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National foreword

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Summary of pages

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Medizinische Informatik - Kategoriale Struktur für Begriffssysteme

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Contents

	Page
Foreword	3
1 Scope	5
2 Normative references	6
3 Terms and Definitions	6
4 Categorial structure description.....	13
5 Conformance of a categorial structure to the document.....	13
Bibliography.....	14

Foreword

This European Standard (EN 12264:2005) has been prepared by Technical Committee CEN/TC 251, "Health informatics", the secretariat of which is held by NEN.

This European Standard shall be given the status of a national standard, either by publication of an identical text or by endorsement, at the latest by December 2005, and conflicting national standards shall be withdrawn at the latest by December 2005.

According to the CEN/CENELEC Internal Regulations, the national standards organizations of the following countries are bound to implement this European Standard : Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom.

Introduction

Computer-based processing and interchange of medical or clinical information require various kinds of terminological systems of concepts to represent that information, such as controlled vocabularies, classifications, nomenclatures, terminologies and thesauri, with or without coding schemes.

The specific terminological issues in the field of health informatics are:

- large number of different terminological systems are available in different clinical specialties;
- large overlap among the subject fields involved;
- large number of codes and rubrics, typically in the order of magnitude of 10,000 to 100,000 entries, in commonly used terminological systems;
- increasing need for re-use of coded data in different health-care contexts;
- polysemy across different clinical specialties and sometimes within them.

The integration of computer-based medical records and administrative information systems in Electronic Health Records (EHR) requires rationalisation in the field, and a uniform way to represent the meaning of medical concepts to ensure that the receiver EHR of a message will catch the meaning introduced by the sender EHR and not only the string of characters embedded in it. It is not possible to impose a rigid uniform standardised natural language clinical terminology on healthcare providers.

Instead a domain specific semantic model has been envisioned and applied in a series of specific European standards (EN) and international standards (ISO) on various subject fields to describe a set of categorial structures in partially overlapping subject fields: a European standard for surgical procedures (EN 1828), an ISO standard on integration of a reference model for nursing (EN ISO 18104) and an ISO technical specification on medical devices. There are also several European Pre standards (ENV) for: clinical laboratory measurements (ENV 1614), medical devices (ENV 12611), vital signs (EN ISO:IEEE 11073-10101 - Part 10101: Nomenclature), point-of-care medical device communication (EN ISO:IEEE 11073-10101 - Part 10101: Nomenclature), medicinal products (ENV 12610), nursing (ENV 14032) and continuity of care (ENV 13940).

This European Standard specifies the terminology and categorial structure description to be used for systems of concepts. Field testing in several countries, revision and integration have provided the comprehensive basis for this document.