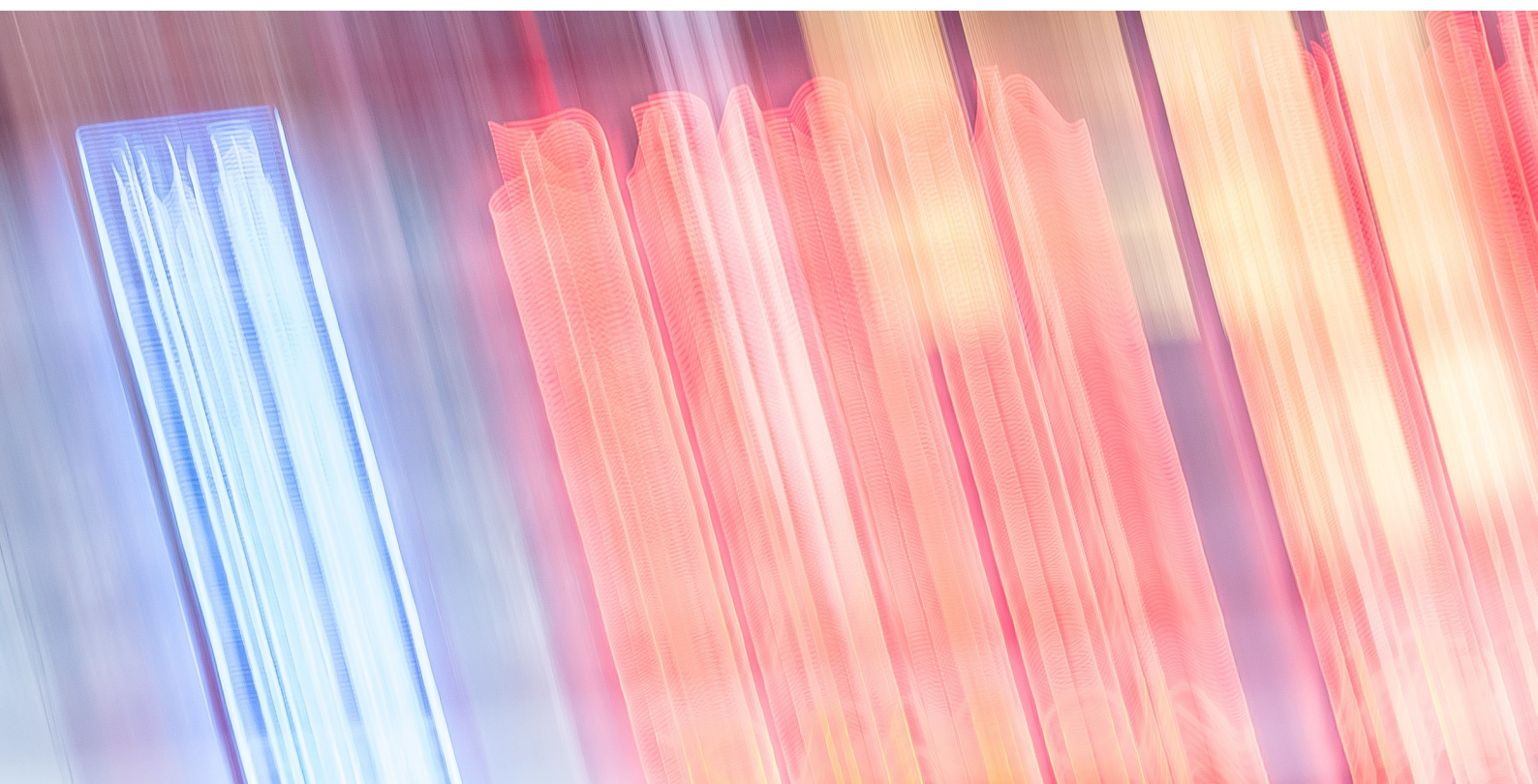# OPCS-4.9 Metadata File Description and how it may be used

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Information and technology
for better health and care

Contents

Introduction

The OPCS-4.9 Metadata file assists the process of validation by providing a full list of valid OPCS-4.9 codes for inclusion in Commissioning Data Sets and Central Returns.

This file does not include validation software. It contains the data that would be suitable for inclusion in such software and used for validation purposes.

The present metadata file includes the basic core of absolute and scrutiny validation checks.

Purpose

This document explains the content, use of the metadata file, and allows suppliers and other persons that use it to implement it effectively.

Maintenance and release

The Terminology & Classifications Delivery Service has responsibility for maintaining and issuing the OPCS-4 metadata file. It is updated and released to support new versions of OPCS-4.

The OPCS-4 Metadata File

The OPCS-4 metadata file contains all valid OPCS-4 codes that may be used in the Commissioning Data Sets. Associated with each code are a series of checks, which can be used to identify where codes are invalid or inconsistent with other patient data such as status of operation and method of delivery.

Suppliers incorporate the OPCS-4 metadata file into patient administration and other systems. The file is the initial source of the validation checks performed by systems on procedure codes and related data. The OPCS-4 metadata file will also form part of local quality assurance and audit functions prior to the submission of HES data.

Types of check

The metadata file includes two types of checks:

- Absolute checks, which are intended to lead to rejection of a record which fails the check
  and
- Scrutiny checks, which generate a warning message to alert the coder to investigate further. These do not automatically lead to rejection of a record.

OPCS-4.9 format and distribution

The text file is named OPCS49MetadataNov2019V1.0.TXT. It contains the OPCS-4.9 metadata in fixed length record format. It is a standard DOS formatted file. It is viewable in NotePad or any other text file program. Convert to the standard UNIX format for use on a UNIX or LINUX machine.

The OPCS-4.9 Metadata file is supplied via the Technology Reference Data Update Distribution Service (TRUD).

Scope of the file

The file lists all the valid 4-character subcategory codes within the tabular list of OPCS-4.9 (Chapters A to Z). The 3-character category codes, i.e. the parents of the 4-character subcategories, are not included.

No account has been taken of codes that may be excluded locally by the NHS. Retired codes are not included in the Metadata file. Codes and descriptions for the **Y90** category are not included.

The file has 9671 entries.

Derivation of the file

The metadata file and all other OPCS-4.9 files were modelled in a classification development tool, which incorporates and enforces file specifications. The Metadata file is derived from this classification tool.

Changes to the file

In the OPCS-4.9 Metadata file the Sex (absolute) field is no longer populated; it is left blank. This is in order to comply with the Equality Act 2010 to ensure equal treatment of patients regardless of a chosen gender.

Where a code in OPCS-4.8 had a Sex (absolute) flag assigned in the Metadata file this has been changed to a Sex (scrutiny) flag.

This will ensure that a record will not be rejected where a procedure that is actually appropriate to the anatomy of the patient but doesn't match with their chosen gender. E.g. orchidectomy in a patient who has chosen to have a female gender.

This should not impact data quality because the Sex (scrutiny) flag will still provide a warning to check the correct record is being coded for that episode of care, if appropriate.

Record format and layout

The file contains one record for each OPCS-4 procedure. The records are presented in operation code order. Each record consists of 253 characters allotted to 16 fields, not all of which are populated with data. Unpopulated and filler fields are filled with space characters to maintain the record structure.

The start of each field is defined by the number of characters from the first character in the record. See Populated field in this release for a record layout table.

Each code is listed with its 3-character category description, 4-character subcategory description and associated metadata. The descriptions are truncated where they are longer than:

- 55 characters for 3-character categories

- 60 characters for 4-character subcategories

A standard list of abbreviations/truncations and application rules have been adopted to comply with field size rules. See Annex 1.

The truncated descriptions, called short terms in the classification development tool, were implemented for codes new at OPCS-4.5. The methodology has been applied to all new OPCS-4 codes in subsequent releases.

Complementary file – OPCS-4 Codes and Titles file

The OPCS-4 Codes and Titles is a text file that contains all the codes with their full title/description. It is distributed with the Metadata file. Where possible the full descriptions from the Codes and Titles file should be used in place of the truncated descriptions. Please note that the Codes and Titles file contains more 4-character codes than the Metadata file because the latter file is restricted to codes for use in the Commissioning Data Sets and Central Returns. Retired and other codes are listed in the Codes and Titles file.

Field List

I. 'Field No' does NOT form part of the file. It is included here to assist with the identification of fields.

II. 'Occurs' indicates how many times a field may repeat in the available space.

Field No	Start Pos	Size	Occurs	Field Description
1	0	11		selection indicators
2	12	1		operation prefix
3	13	4		operation code
4	17	8		Filler
5	25	55		operation name (3-character category)
6	80	5		Filler
7	85	60		operation name (4-character subcategory)
8	145	43		Filler
9	188	1		sex (absolute)
10	189	3		Filler
11	192	1		sex (scrutiny)
12	193	1		Filler
13	194	2		status of operation
14	196	23		Filler
15	219	1	10	method of delivery
16	229	24		Filler

Populated fields in this release

The following fields are populated:

Field No	Field Description
1	selection indicators
3	operation code
5	operation name (3-character category)
7	operation name (4-character subcategory)
11	sex (scrutiny)
13	status of operation
15	method of delivery

Individual field descriptions

The characteristics of the populated fields are described below:

FIELD DESCRIPTION	SELECTION INDICATORS
Field number	1
Start position	0
Field size	11 characters
Derivation	NHS Digital
Type of check	
Content	Always contains 1
Special features	None
Use	None
Development & Maintenance	None planned

FIELD DESCRIPTION	OPCS-4.9 CODE
Field number	3
Start position	13
Field size	4 characters
Derivation	NHS Digital
Type of check	Absolute check
Content	1st char A-Z 2nd, 3rd, & 4th chars Numeric No decimal point is included
Special features	None
Use	This parameter is used to test the validity of a code used and/or manually input
Development & Maintenance	Codes will not be added to or deleted from the set unless nationally authorised. However, modifications will be applied as part of the expected development of OPCS-4

FIELD DESCRIPTION	OPERATION NAME (3-character category)
Field number	5
Start position	25
Field size	55 characters
Derivation	NHS Digital
Type of check	Not normally used as a check. Provided for display purposes, in association with the 4-character operation name where systems are unable to accommodate the full description The OPCS-4 Codes and Titles file provides the full-length description for all operations. It is recommended that this file is used for OPERATION NAME
Content	Presented as text, to include abbreviations
Special features	Most abbreviations, see Annex 1, should be immediately obvious, others a little less so due to the length and complexity of the term, before editing. Description is truncated where it is over 55 characters in the tabular list
Use	Used with the 4-character operation name, when the description cannot be considered to be free-standing and where systems are unable to accommodate the full description.
Development & Maintenance	Changes may be applied as part of the expected development of OPCS-4

FIELD DESCRIPTION	OPERATION NAME (4-character subcategory)
Field number	7
Start position	85
Field size	60 characters
Derivation	NHS Digital
Type of check	Not normally used as a check.
	Provided for display purposes, sometimes in association with the 3-character operation name where systems are unable to accommodate the full description.
	The OPCS-4 Codes and Titles file provides the full-length description for all operations. It is recommended that this file is used for OPERATION NAME.
Content	Presented as text, to include abbreviations
Special features	Most abbreviations, see Annex 1, should be immediately obvious, others a little less so due to the length and complexity of the term, before editing.
	Description is truncated where it is over 60 characters in the tabular list.
Use	Normally used for display purposes and as a response to the entry of an OPCS-4 code where systems are unable to accommodate the full description. It enables the coder to check that they have inputted the correct code. It may have to be used with the 3-character procedure name, when it cannot be considered to be free-standing.
Development & Maintenance	Changes may be applied as part of the expected development of OPCS-4.

FIELD DESCRIPTION	SEX (SCRUTINY)
Field number	11
Start position	192
Field size	1 character
Derivation	NHS Digital
Type of check	Scrutiny check
Content	1 = males not accepted 2 = females not accepted space = accept any sex code
Special features	All codes assigned Sex (absolute) flags in the previous Metadata file are now assigned Sex (scrutiny) flags, see Changes to the file.
Use	Identifies procedures that are usually, but not always associated with a single sex. It should be noted that record failure associated with the use of this field may indicate an incorrect patient record or an incorrect procedure code. Software developers should allow this check to be over-ridden where appropriate.
Development & Maintenance	Changes may be applied as part of the expected development of OPCS-4.

FIELD DESCRIPTION	STATUS OF OPERATION
Field number	13
Start position	194
Field size	2 character
Derivation	NHS Digital
Type of check	Absolute check
Content	01 = Code can be used in any position 02 = Code cannot be used in primary position
Special features	None
Use	Shows when the code can and cannot be used in the primary position.
Development & Maintenance	Changes may be applied as part of the expected development of OPCS-4.

FIELD DESCRIPTION	METHOD OF DELIVERY
Field number	15
Start position	219
Field size	1 character
Derivation	NHS Digital
Type of check	Absolute check
Content	10 one-character codes representing the DELIVERY METHOD CODE values 0 - 9. Check character position corresponding to DELIVERY METHOD CODE value. space = no check required 1 = reject for scrutiny DELIVERY METHOD CODE: 0 Spontaneous vertex 1 Spontaneous other cephalic 2 Low forceps, not breech 3 Other forceps, not breech 4 Ventouse, vacuum extraction 5 Breech 6 Breech extraction 7 Elective caesarean section 8 Emergency caesarean section 9 Other
Special features	None
Use	The above values validate the Delivery Method, see https://www.datadictionary.nhs.uk/data_dictionary/data_field_notes/d/del/delivery_method_code_de.asp?shownav=1
Development & Maintenance	Changes may be applied as part of the expected development of OPCS-4

Enquires

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For Information about the Terminology & Classifications Delivery Service visit website:

https://digital.nhs.uk/services/terminology-and-classifications

Annex 1

Abbreviations

The abbreviations below are applied when a description has to be truncated. Briefly, the longest words in the description are repeatedly truncated until it meets the required length. New additions to OPCS-4.9 metadata file are shown in **bold**. The full methodology is available from the Service Desk - see Enquiries.

Note: Usage of these abbreviations is limited to the descriptions in the metadata file.

Full Word	Abbreviation
abdomen	abdo
abdominal	abdo
ablation	abl
abnormal	abn
abnormality	abn
acetabular	acet
adjacent	adj
advancement	adv
ambulatory	ambul
amniotic	amn
amputation	amp
ampulla	ampu
anastomosis	anast
aneurysm	aneur
aneurysmal	aneur
aneurysms	aneur
angiocardiography	angiocard
angioplasty	angpl
anomalous	anom
anterior	ant
anterolateral	antlat
aorta	ao
aortic	ao
aortopulmonary	aortpulm
aortoventriculoplasty	aortvent

approach	appr
aqueous	aq
arrest	arr
arterial	art
arteries	art
arteriotomy	art
artery	art
arthrotomy	arthro
arthroplasty	arthropl
articular	artic
articulation	artic
artificial	artif
arteriovenous	artven
ascending	asc
aspiration	aspn
assisted	ass
atlantoaxial	atlantoax
atresia	atr
atrioventicular	atriovent
attendance	att
attention to	att to
autograft	autgr
autotransplantation	autotranspl
axillary	axil
bacterial	bact
balloon	baln
between	betw
bifurcation	bif
bilateral	bilat
biopsy	biop
biventricular	bivent
bladder	blad
bleeding	bleed
branch	bra

brachytherapy	brach
bronchodilator	bronchdil
bronchoscope	brscope
bowel	bwl
calculus	calc
calculation	calcul
cardioverter	cardvert
carotid	car
cartilage	cart
catheter	cath
catheterisation	cath
cauterisation	caut
cavopulmonary	cavopulm
cement	cem
cemented	cem
centralisation	cent
cephalic	ceph
cerebral	cereb
cervical	cerv
chamber	chamb
chemotherapy	chemo
chemosurgical	chemosurg
circulatory	circ
circlage	circl
coagulation	coag
colonic	col
collateral	collat
collaterals	collat
common	com
combined	comb
component	comp
compensation	compen
complex	compl
conduit	cond

conducting	conduct
congenital	congen
connection	conn
construction	**cons**
controlled	cont
contraceptive	contracep
conversion	conv
coronary	coro
correction	corr
correctional	corr
colonoscope	coscope
cholangiopancreatography	CP
cranium	cran
creation	creat
computed tomography	CT
curettage	cur
cystoscope	cyscope
cystogastrostomy	cystgast
cytology	cyto
decompression	decomp
defibrillator	defib
definition	defn
deformity	deform
delivered	deliv
delivery	deliv
denervation	denerv
dermatological	derm
descending	desc
destruction	dest
diagnosis	diag
diagnostic	diag
diaphragmatic	diaph
dilation	diln
dimensional	dim

direct	dir
dislocated	disloc
dislocation	disloc
dissection	diss
diverter	**div**
dosimetry	dos
drainage	drain
dressing	dress
duodenal	duod
duodenum	duod
electron	elect
electroanatomic	electranat
electrophysiological	electrophys
eluting	elut
embolectomy	embolec
embolisation	embolis
emergency	emer
endarterectomy	endart
endoluminal	endlum
endoscopic	endo
endovascular	endov
epigastric	epig
evacuation	evac
examination	exam
excision	excis
expanding	exp
exploration	expl
extended	ext
extracardiac	extcard
extracranial	extcran
extensor	exten
external	exter
exteriorisation	exterior
extirpation	extirp

extramedullary	extmed
extra-articular	extra-art
fallopian	fall
femoral	fem
femur	fem
fertilisation	fert
fetoscopic	feto
fibreoptic	fibre
fistula	fist
fixation	fix
fixture	fixt
fixtures	fixt
flexible	flex
flutter	flut
foreign	forn
fracture	fract
fragment	frag
fragmentation	fragment
functional	funct
fusion	fus
gastrointestinal	GI
glenoid	glen
glenohumeral	glenhum
graft	gr
hallucis longus	hall long
hemiarthroplasty	hemiarthropl
hemicolectomy	hemicol
hepatic	hep
hepatitis	hep
humeral	hum
humour	humo
hybrid	hybr
hysterectomy	hyst
ileoanal	ilan

ileostomy	ileost
image guidance	imag guid
implantation	implant
incision	incis
incisional	incis
including	incl
incontinence	incont
inferior	inf
infradiaphragmatic	infradiaph
infrarenal	infren
infusion	infu
infusional	infu
inhaled	inhal
injection	inj
insemination	insem
insertion	insert
instrument	instr
instrumental	instr
instrumentation	instr
instrumented	instr
internal	int
interatrial	intatr
interbody	intbod
intestinal	**inte**
intracapsular	intcaps
intracavitary	intcav
intracranial	intcran
intradiscal	intdisc
intensifier	intens
interventricular	intervent
intrahepatic	inthep
interlaminar	intlam
intensity-modulated	int-mod
interposition	intpos

intra-abdominal	intra-abdo
intra-articular	intra-art
intramedullary	intramed
intraoperative	intraop
intraventricular	intravent
introduced	intro
introduction	intro
interstitial	intstit
intertransverse	inttrans
intussusception	intus
intrauterine	intuter
intervertebral	intvert
involuntary	invol
interphalangeal	IP
intravenous	IV
jejunum	jej
joint	jt
junction	junct
laceration	lacn
laparoscopic	lap
laparoscope	lascope
lateral	lat
lavage	lav
laying	lay
lesion	lesn
longus	long
lower	low
left	lt
lumbar	lumb
manipulation	manip
manipulative	manip
mastectomy	mast
material	mat
maxillofacial	maxfacial

measurement	meas
measures	meas
mechanical	mech
medial	med
mediastinum	mediast
megavoltage	mgvolt
microscopically	micr
microspheres	microsph
microtherapeutic	microther
microvascular	microvasc
microvascularly	microvasc
middle	mid
magnetic resonance	MR
metatarsal	MT
metatarsophalangeal	MTP
muscle	musc
myocutaneous	myocut
myringotomy	myring
nasopharynx	nasophar
neoplasm	neo
neurolysis	neurol
neurostimulator	neurstim
non-removable	non-rem
obstetric	obs
obstruction	obst
occlusion	occl
oesophageal	oes
oesophagus	oes
oesophagoscope	oescope
oesophagectomy	oesectomy
osteocutaneous	**osteocut**
osteomuscluocutaneous	**osteomuscut**
operation	opn
operations	opns

orthovoltage	orthv
oscillation	osc
osteotomy	osteo
other	oth
other specified	oth spec
overgrowth	over
pancreas	panc
pancreatic	panc
pancreatography	pancgraph
panproctocolectomy	panproct
papanicolau	pap
parenteral	paren
partial	part
passage	pass
patches	patch
pattern	patt
pectoral	pect
pedicle	ped
pedicled	ped
pelvi-ureteric	pelv-uret
peroneal	per
percutaneous	perc
perforator	perf
pericardial	pericard
peripheral	periph
peritoneum	perit
permanent	perm
phalanx	phal
pharynx	phar
photodynamic	photodyn
placement	place
plastic	plas
plication	plic
polarity	polar

polymer	poly
popliteal	popl
posterior	post
postoperative	postop
presentation	pres
preservation	preserv
previous	prev
primary	prim
procedures	proc
procurement	procur
products	prod
profundoplasty	profun
prolapse	prol
prolonged	prol
prostate	pros
prosthesis	prost
prosthetic	prost
proximal	prox
pulmonary	pulm
radiation	rad
radioactive	radioact
radiofrequency	radiofr
radiological	radiol
radiotherapy	radioth
reanastomosis	reanast
recession	recess
reconstruction	recon
reconstructive	recon
rectum	rect
rectus abdominis	rect abdom
rectosigmoidectomy	rectsigm
recurrent	recur
reduction	reduct
re-exploration	re-expl

rehabilitation	rehab
release	rel
removable	rem
removal	rem
remanipulation	remanip
reopening	reopen
repair	rep
replacement	repl
replantation	replant
repositioning	repos
resection	resect
response	resp
respiratory	respir
retropubic	retpub
retrograde	retro
reversal	rev
reverse	rev
revision	revis
revisional	revis
rigid	rig
rotation	rot
right	rt
salpingoophorectomy	salpingooph
sampling	sampl
sclerotherapy	scler
second	sec
secondary	sec
segment	segm
sigmoid	sg
sigmoidoscope	sgscope
shoulder	shoul
simple	simp
skeletal	skel
sphincter	sphinc

sphincteroplasty	sphincplas
sphincterotomy	sphinct
stabilisation	stab
stenosis	sten
stereotactic	stereo
structure	struct
subclavian	subcl
subcutaneous	subcut
submucosal	submuc
substance	subst
subtotal	subtot
superior	sup
superficial	supf
support	supp
suprarenal	supren
surgical	surg
suspension	susp
sympathetic	symp
syndrome	synd
system	syst
systemic	syst
technical	tech
technique	tech
temporal	temp
temporary	tempor
tetralogy	tetr
therapeutic	ther
therapy	ther
thermal	therm
thermocoagulation	thermcg
thoracic	thor
thoracoabdominal	thorabdo
tibial	tib
tissue	tiss

total	tot
trachea	trach
tracheal	trach
traction	tract
transarticular	transartic
transfer	transf
transforaminal	transfor
transfusion	transfu
transjugular	transjug
transluminal	transl
transposed	transp
transposition	transp
transplantation	transpl
transverse	transv
traumatic	traum
treatment	treat
tunnel	tunn
uncemented	uncem
unilateral	unilat
univentricular	univent
unspecified	unspec
upper	up
ureteroscopic	uret
ureteroscope	urscope
using	usi
ultrasound	US
vacuum	vac
vaginal	vag
valved	valv
venous	ven
ventricle	vent
ventricular	vent
ventilation	ventil
vertebra	vert

vertebrae	vert
vertebral	vert
vessel	vess
visceral	visc
vein	vn
volume	vol