



THE CLINICAL TERMS VERSION 3 (The READ CODES)

CONTENTS

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Purpose of this document

This document is one of a series that, taken together, describe the contents, structure and function of Clinical Terms Version 3 (The Read Codes).

This introduction is intended to provide information on Clinical Terms Version 3. It is also a guide to the other available documents each of which is updated independently. For this reason, different chapters may have different version numbers.

INFORMATION

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1. The Main Chapters

The top concept in the thesaurus is 'Read thesaurus', beneath which the main chapters for the user to identify core concepts are:

Clinical findings

Operations, procedures and interventions

Causes of injury and poisoning

Administration

Occupations

Context-dependent categories

The following value chapters would normally be browsed by the user only for detail to support the qualifier mechanism:

Staging and scales

Drug

Appliances and equipment

Unit

Organisms

Anatomical concepts

Additional values

The following chapters would not normally be browsed by the user for core terms:

Attribute

Read thesaurus concept type

Temporary and local additions

Extinct cross-type concept

1.1 Qualifier Mechanism

Qualifiers add extra detail to core terms. Each qualifier consists of an attribute and a value. The attribute describes the relationship between the extra detail and the core term, the value is the detail itself.

For example, a core term such as *Biopsy of cranial nerve lesion* may have extra qualifying detail of:

Site: Facial nerve

The word 'Site' is the attribute and 'Facial nerve' is the value.

Another example; a core term of *Appendicectomy* may have extra qualifying detail of:

Priority: Emergency

The word 'Priority' is the attribute and 'Emergency' is the value. Attributes are listed in one chapter, while the values are split into several different chapters as below.

1.2 Value Chapters to Support the Qualifier Mechanism

Values themselves may be qualified. For example, anatomical concepts are qualified by laterality (left, right, bilateral, etc.) where appropriate. This means that a core term may refer to different bits of anatomy with no ambiguity as to the laterality of each, e.g.:

Reconstruction with skin graft

Site of harvest: Skin on thigh (Left)

Site of reconstruction: Skin of cheek (Right)

2. Clinical Findings

The following sub-chapters are included in this chapter:

History and observations

Disorders

Morphology findings

2.1 History and Observations

This chapter contains terms for observations or for history findings that may be obtained from a clinical history, examination, assessment, special investigation or test. The information may be gathered first hand from the patient, or second hand from records, or perhaps reported by a carer. The following are sample terms from this chapter:

Itching

Bronchial breathing

Purulent discharge from wound

Home help attends

The manner in which the information is gathered is not included in the terms. For this reason the earlier version prefixed by 'C/O' (Complaining of), 'H/O' (History of), 'O/E' (On examination) and 'F/H' (Family history) have been marked 'optional' and listed in the context dependent categories chapter. The recording of the manner in which the information is collected – e.g. on examination, personal history – is strongly influenced by the structure of the electronic record. It is anticipated that such information, once the model has been agreed, will use the qualifier mechanism to express this information.

2.2 Disorders

This chapter contains terms that are descriptions of disease processes, or of abnormal function or form. The concepts are arrived at by clinical interpretation. The sub-chapters are mostly anatomically based. The following are sample terms from this chapter.

Folate deficiency anaemia

Reactive depression

Thyrotoxicosis

Atrial fibrillation

2.3 Morphology Findings

This section has been reviewed and its contents moved to the tumour morphology section under the Additional Values chapter (see section 14).

Links are being developed through the template mechanism of Disorder core terms to the relevant tumour morphology term using the new value section.

3. Operations, Procedures and Interventions

This chapter list physical procedures that are performed on the patient. These are usually therapeutic in nature, but some such as *Laparotomy* or *Needle aspiration of breast* may be performed for diagnostic reasons.

The following sub-chapters are included in this chapter:

Operations and procedures

Clinical examination

Psychotherapeutic, behavioural and communications procedures

Activity of daily living procedures and interventions

Indirect care procedures

Regimes and therapies

Investigations

Appliance procedures are also included in this chapter.

The following are sample terms from this chapter:

Coronary artery bypass graft

Laser acupuncture

Cholecystectomy

Appendicectomy

3.1 Regimes and Therapies

This sub-chapter contains clinically useful terms for a range of non-surgical treatments and regimes. This section includes many of the concepts delivered by the Professions Allied to Medicine.

Example terms are:

Thrombolytic therapy

Conversational skills training

Ultrasound therapy

Percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy feeding

3.2 Investigations

This sub-chapter lists laboratory tests and special clinical investigations. The terms describe the procedure rather than the results of the tests, which are listed in the History and Observations sub-chapter.

The following are sample terms from this chapter:

Schilling test

Echocardiograph

Pulse oximetry

Light microscopy

4. Causes of Injury and Poisoning

This chapter mirrors the 'External causes of morbidity and mortality' chapter in ICD-10 and is provided to allow the recording of the situation in which an injury occurs. The current terms are identical to those in Version 2 chapter U and include an [X] to show that they are classification terms, cross-mappable to ICD-10.

Example terms:

[X]Assault

[X]Pedal cyclist injured in transport accident

[X]Accident to watercraft causing drowning and submersion

[X]Nosocomial condition

Concepts that mirror ICD-9 E codes are still present but marked as 'optional'. It is anticipated that this chapter will undergo some further work to cater for both clinical and classification views of causes of injury and poisoning.

5. Administration

The chapter is organised by procedures such as 'Referral', 'Admission' and 'Discharge'; and status such as 'Under the care of'. It contains terms that are mainly related to general practice since it is based upon a restructuring of administration sections of both early version Read Code sets, but the new structure is intended to enable addition of terms specific to secondary care.

Administrative forms vary within the UK and undergo change periodically. A set of generic terms (e.g. *Intrauterine contraceptive device claim*) have been included to cater for such variation and also for future changes. Developmental templates have been created to enable the use of qualifiers to specify the form used. The inclusive terms will still be available.

Example terms:

Drug addiction notification

Referral to physiotherapist

Patient registered GMS1

Payment of child health surveillance claim

6. Occupations

This chapter provides a list of job titles. It is little changed from earlier versions.

Example terms:

Plumber

Auctioneer

Receptionist

Psychiatrist

7. Context Dependent Categories

Some concepts that used to be embedded in earlier version Read code terms will be separately represented in Clinical Terms Version 3. These include concepts such as:

Complaining of

On examination

Family history

History of

Normal, Abnormal

Done, Not done

Stopped, Started

Offered, Not offered

Wanted, Not wanted

Terms that have these and other, contextual concepts embedded in the term have been listed in this chapter and marked as optional. However, these 'combination terms' may well remain useful until the full range of contextual qualifiers is available. As with all CTV3 Read Codes they will never be deleted and so may continue to be used and to be understood by earlier version and CTV3 users.

The Context of Care project delivered a number of terms which describe the 'context' of a concept. Further collaborative work is under way to evolve a model which it is hoped will allow formal representation of these important qualifying concepts.

Example terms:

Action status

Ordered

Done

8. Staging and Scales

This chapter contains a number of staging schemes and scales in clinical use. These schemes themselves have additional information carried by the template mechanism. The links between a number of tumour staging schemes and their appropriate values have been released, e.g. TNM, FIGO and Dukes schemes.

9. Drug

This chapter covers the range of medicinal products that can be prescribed under the NHS. Specialist sections include special food, dialysis fluids, radio-pharmaceuticals and camouflage cosmetics.

Example terms:

Digoxin 124 micrograms tablet

Clinifeed 1.9 liquid

Paracetamol 120mg/5ml oral suspension

Pilocarpine HCl 2% eye drops

Technetium (99m Tc) gluconate injection

10. Appliances + Equipment

This section contains all prescribable products in the Drug Tariff for England and Wales. Some sections, e.g. dressings, have been expanded to include products that are used in hospitals.

Example terms:

Cotton crepe 5cm bandage BP

Foley 10ml balloon 2-way Teflon coated male catheter

Granuflex Extra Thin 15cm x 15cm dressing

Colodress Plus colostomy bag

11. Unit

This chapter includes SI and other units used in the clinical record.

Example terms:

msec

Prism dioptries

mm Hg

fmol/24h

12. Organisms

This chapter includes lists of plants, animals, insects and all micro-organisms that are considered to be of significance to humans.

Example terms:

Staphylococcus aureus

Human cytomegalovirus

Trichomonas vaginalis

Yellow hornet

13. Anatomical Concepts

This chapter contains a comprehensive set of anatomical terms sufficient to add detail to the core terms. It has been considerably expanded to support the description of sites relating to disorders and procedures and includes both regional and systematic anatomy.

Example terms:

Pouch of Douglas

Superior mesenteric artery

Greater tuberosity of humerus

Extensor carpi radialis longus

14. Additional Values

This chapter contains structured lists of the remaining values and includes such things as:

Substances, materials and objects

Environments and geographical locations

It also contains descriptive words such as:

Bilateral

Definite

Mild

Some consolidation of this chapter has been carried out. It is likely some of these sections will be moved out into 'stand alone' chapters as has happened with anatomical concepts, organisms and units.

15. Attribute

The attributes chapter contains words describing the linkages between core terms and values such as:

Causative agent

Site

Laterality

Priority

16. Read Thesaurus Concept Type

Each Read Code concept is labelled as being of a certain 'type'. These types are themselves Read Codes and are listed in this chapter. The typing of Read Codes will continue to be refined and so more Read thesaurus concept types will appear in this chapter.

Examples:

Procedure type

Clinical findings type

Value type

17. Temporary and Local Additions

This concept exists as a 'peg' for local and temporary codes.

18. Extinct Cross Type Concept

In CTV3 there is a concept status of 'extinct' for ambiguous codes from earlier versions. These codes are placed in the most appropriate position in the hierarchy within the 'sub-type' structure of CTV3.

However, there are some extinct codes that can only be placed high in the hierarchy. For example:

A00.. Cholera
Vibrio cholerae

This code is ambiguous, as it means an infection but also has a synonym of the organism.

In cases such as these where the components would be placed in separate parts of the hierarchy (i.e. 'Intestinal infectious disease' and 'Organisms' in this example), the extinct code is positioned as a child of:

XaB0f Extinct cross type concept