

Briefing Note for the Member Forum, Content Managers Advisory Group, and Clinical Leads

January 2024

Inactivation of the Navigational Concept hierarchy

Purpose

The purpose of this briefing note is to inform the SNOMED International Community of Practice and select Advisory Groups and Project Groups of the intention to inactivate the Navigational concept hierarchy (<<363743006 |Navigational concept (navigational concept)|) which consists of 634 concepts that have been placed in this hierarchy due to their inability to be defined or to present a universally understood meaning, thus violating the Understandability, Reproducibility, and Useability standards for SNOMED CT.

Background

This issue was brought to light during a discussion at the Modeling Advisory Group meeting in September 2022 as part of a discussion related to the impact of semantic tags on the MRCM. It was suggested that the Navigational concept hierarchy be inactivated, due to the fact that while it is stated in the SNOMED International Editorial Guide that these concepts are no longer supported in the International release and are not suitable for data recording or aggregation of data, they are being used in some implementations in place of more suitable Clinical findings, Record artifacts, etc.

The current SNOMED Editorial Guide states, "Navigational concepts were created to group other concepts without explicit regard for defining attributes (since there were none). Their purpose was to provide top level groupers for subsets and reference sets used in implementations. Because the Reference Set mechanism is now available, there is no longer a need for navigational concepts in the International Release; however, they can be added at the national or lower level."

A key challenge is that additional effort is needed by implementers to produce hierarchical relationships under these groupers. This is also the key criticism of the lack of relationships that cannot be fulfilled by the navigational concepts.

Issues

There are a number of Navigational concepts that are currently in high use in the UK and would require suitable replacements to ensure data traceability. The table below lists the affected concepts and the proposed replacement values.

| CONCEPTID | Fully Specified Name | Inactivation reason | Replacement |
|-----------|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| 394617004 | Result (navigational concept) | Nonconformance to editorial policy | 423100009 Results section (record artifact) |
| 160237006 | History/symptoms (navigational concept) | Ambiguous | 1003642006 Past medical history section (record artifact) 422625006 History of present illness section (record artifact) |
| 309157004 | Normal laboratory finding (navigational concept) | Nonconformance with editorial policy | 442082004 Measurement finding within reference range (finding) |
| 267368005 | Endocrine, nutritional, metabolic and immunity disorders (navigational concept) | Ambiguous | 362969004 Disorder of endocrine system (disorder) 2492009 Nutritional disorder (disorder) 75934005 Metabolic disease (disorder) 414029004 Disorder of immune function (disorder) OR New extension concept in record artifact hierarchy |
| 243800003 | Test categorized by action status (navigational concept) | Non-conformance to editorial policy | No replacement |
| 250541005 | Biochemical finding (navigational concept) | Non-conformance to editorial policy | Recommend: New extension concept |
| 309230008 | Borderline laboratory finding (navigational concept) | Non-conformance to editorial policy | Recommend: New extension concept |
| 309158009 | Laboratory finding abnormal (navigational concept) | Non-conformance to editorial policy | 442096005 Measurement finding outside reference range (finding) |
| 118246004 | Laboratory test finding (navigational concept) | Ambiguous | 118245000 Measurement finding (finding) 441742003 Evaluation finding (finding) |
| 282465005 | Physiological functions and activities (navigational concept) | Non-conformance to editorial policy | 1184588000 Functional status document section (record artifact) |
| 165347009 | Laboratory test result borderline (navigational concept) | Non-conformance to editorial policy | Recommend: New extension concept |
| 309159001 | Normal hematology finding (navigational concept) | Non-conformance to editorial policy | Recommend: New extension concept |
| 250207003 | Hematology finding (navigational concept) | Non-conformance to editorial policy | 4321000179101 Hematology report (record artifact) |

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|-----------|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| 370121008 | Disorder of blood / lymphatics / immune system (navigational concept) | Ambiguous | 414029004 Disorder of immune function (disorder) 3305006 Disorder of lymphatic vessel (disorder) 414022008 Disorder of cellular component of blood (disorder) |
| 309194008 | Hematology finding abnormal (navigational concept) | Nonconformance to editorial policy | 34641000087106 Hematology test outside reference range (finding) |
| 276437003 | Skin, hair and nail finding (navigational concept) | Nonconformance to editorial policy | 106077005 Integumentary system finding (finding) |
| 243798005 | Procedure categorized by action status (navigational concept) | Non-conformance to editorial policy | No replacement |

In consultation with the user of these concepts, they have asked that we provide substantial lead time before inactivating and replacing the high usage concepts.

Next Steps

1. Solicit input from the membership and Community of Practice on the impact that inactivation of the Navigational concept hierarchy would have on their implementations.
2. For those concepts with high usage in the table above and are suitable for the International release, identify suitable replacement concepts and encourage migration of existing implementations to these new concepts.
3. For those concepts with high usage that are not suitable for the International release, encourage extensions to create replacement concepts in their extension.
3. Notify the Community of Practice that the Navigational concept hierarchy will be inactivated without replacement (aside from the exceptions noted above) in the first quarter of 2024.

Recommendations

The SNOMED Editorial Advisory Group has reviewed and agreed with this proposal. The recommendation is to utilize the refset mechanism as a means for grouping concepts to fulfill specific requirements. Alternatively, if the meaning is clear for a national extension, navigational/organizing concepts can be added to the extension.

| Approvals | Date | Name |
|-------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Chief Terminologist | December 13, 2023 | James T. Case |
| Director of Content and | December 13, 2023 | Monica Harry |

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|---------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Mapping | | |
| CSRM Representative | December 13, 2023 | Jane Millar |

James T. Case, 2023-12-13