

Proposal for Formation of a New International Pathology Working Group for the International Health Terminology Standards Development Organization

The newly-formed International Health Terminology Standards Development Organization (IHTSDO[®], also known as SNOMED SDO[®]) has acquired the intellectual property rights of SNOMED Clinical Terms (SNOMED CT[®]) and its antecedents from the College of American Pathologists, marking a milestone in the international standardization of health data.

SNOMED CT[®] (Systematized Nomenclature of Medicine-Clinical Terms) is considered to be the most comprehensive, multilingual clinical healthcare terminology in the world. SNOMED CT[®] was a joint development between the NHS in England and the College of American Pathologists (CAP) to develop an international clinical terminology and was formed in 1999 by the convergence of SNOMED RT and the United Kingdom's Clinical Terms Version 3 (formerly known as the Read Codes). It has greater depth and coverage of healthcare than the versions of Clinical Terms (Read Codes) that it replaces.

SNOMED CT[®] provides the core general terminology for the electronic health record (EHR) and contains more than 357,000 concepts with unique meanings and formal logic-based definitions organized into hierarchies. When implemented in software applications, SNOMED CT[®] represents clinically relevant information consistently, reliably and comprehensively as an integral part of producing electronic health records.

The new international organization is assuming responsibility for the ongoing maintenance, development, quality assurance, and distribution of SNOMED CT[®]. The CAP will continue to support SDO operations under an initial 3-year contract and will continue to provide SNOMED-related products and services as a licensee of the terminology.

The IHTSDO[®] is registered as a not-for-profit association within Denmark. Its Charter Members are organizations representing Australia, Canada, Denmark, Lithuania, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Membership is open to all countries, and there is a provision for sponsored use in developing countries. The IHTSDO[®] will establish formal harmonization activities with other organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO), to promote effective interoperability between SNOMED CT[®] and other health data standards. A description of IHTSDO[®]'s principles and objectives, open and participatory governance process, and uniform licensing terms is at <http://www.ihtsdo.org/>.

The IHTSDO[®] employs an international organizational structure as shown in figure 1. The international "core" part of this organization has a hierarchical governance structure as shown in figure 2. Working Groups (not shown in figure 2) consist primarily of an international group of volunteers that report to one of the four IHTSDO[®] standing committees (Content, Technical, Research and Development, and Quality Assurance). They generally provide domain expertise in a particular area of medicine or medical informatics. The Working Groups that are currently active include: Anesthesia, Concept Model, Mapping, Nursing, Primary Care, and Pharmacy. While a Pathology

Proposal for Formation of a New International Pathology Working Group for the International Health Terminology Standards Development Organization

Working Group had previously existed within the original CAP organizational structure, an international group to function within the IHTSDO® has yet to be formed. This proposal is an effort to initiate formation of such an entity.

This proposal calls for the World Association of Societies of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine (WASPaLM) to organize the formation of an international Pathology Working Group to report to the Content Committee of the IHTSDO. The purpose of this Working Group is to provide new as well as updated Pathology content to the SNOMED core via the IHTSDO Content committee. The need for such domain expert contribution has never been greater as the practice of Pathology is changing more rapidly today than ever before. Pathology is also a rather unique medical specialty due to the heterogeneity of disciplines that fall within its purview, representing a medical specialty that bridges the basic and clinical sciences. With the advent of new molecular techniques, new laboratory instruments, digital imaging advancements, a new generation of Informatics-savvy physicians, and a rapidly changing healthcare environment, the field of Pathology is evolving at a visibly rapid pace. With such evolution comes the need for the ability to describe new and updated concepts within this field. WASPaLM is an organization that is perfectly poised to organize a response to this need.

At present, there are 30 Societies, Colleges or Associations in 20 countries involved with WASPaLM (including the College of American Pathologists). The World Association has become increasingly active in international affairs, representing pathology at the World Health Organization (WHO), affiliating with the Council of International Organizations in the Medical Sciences (CIOMS), and presenting educational programs for pathologists in countries in need. The World Association has a number of Categorical Secretariats and Committees, each with a Constituent Pathology Society or College taking a particular responsibility on an international footing. These include the Commission on World Standards and Accreditation (COWSA; with the College of American Pathologists) which represents WASPaLM societies to both ISO and the World Health Organization; Secretariat on Pathology Secretariat on Pathology Education (Royal College of Pathologists, London); Secretariat on Forensic Pathology (Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia); Informatics Secretariat (internal to WASPaLM); Secretariat on Ethics in Pathology and Laboratory Medicine (Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia); and Committees managing relationships with the World Health Organization, CIOMS, the International Standards Organization and the Clinical Laboratory Standards Institute.

Although the details of the logistics and organizational structure are subject to change, Working Group membership shall be in accordance with the regulations documented in the IHTSDO Articles of Association. It is anticipated that WASPaLM would establish a new SNOMED Secretariat and member societies would each nominate one representative and one alternate to serve on a panel of domain experts (“special interest group”) spanning multiple sub-disciplines within the field of Pathology.

Membership of Working Groups shall be open to interested parties who can demonstrably contribute to the work of this group. Specifically, an applicant need not be associated with a WASPaLM member society to be considered for appointment to

Proposal for Formation of a New International Pathology Working Group for the International Health Terminology Standards Development Organization

the Working Group. Nominations will be received and processed by the chair of the Working Group with possible review and co-approval by the chair of the IHTSDO Content Committee and the President of WASPaLM.

The chair of this Working Group will be nominated on a rotating basis by the President of WASPaLM and affirmed by the chair of the IHTSDO Content Committee. This individual will serve as the administrator of the SNOMED Secretariat to the WASPaLM Bureau (Board) and as a liaison between the Working Group and the IHTSDO Content Committee. Extra funding for this individual will be required, in part provided by WASPaLM for travel to Bureau meetings and in part funded by the IHTSDO for travel to Content Committee meetings.

Because of the cost associated with international travel, each participating WASPaLM member society would fund at least one of its representatives to attend an annual face to face IHTSDO Pathology Working Group meeting. WASPaLM will provide organizational and logistic support and assist funding of administrative costs, meeting room facility costs and costs for teleconferences. Full use of the IHTSDO collaborative website will help to minimize inter-meeting costs.

This document reflects contribution from the immediate past chair of the SNOMED International Standards Board (Raj Dash), the immediate past chair of the SNOMED/CAP Pathology Working Group (John Madden), the President Elect of WASPaLM (Pete Travers), the President Elect of CAP (Jared Schwartz), and the Chair of the IHTSDO (Martin Severs). It will be presented to the WASPaLM Bureau meeting in Malaysia in August 2007. If accepted, the (potentially revised) proposal will be forwarded to WASPaLM constituent societies soliciting their participation and nomination of representatives. This solicitation would begin at the House of Representatives meeting following the Bureau meeting in Malaysia. The list of participating member societies and the revised proposal will then be submitted to the Content committee of the IHTSDO for consideration at its next meeting. The initiation of the activities of a newly formed Pathology Working Group is anticipated to occur in the first quarter of 2008.

Proposal for Formation of a New International Pathology Working Group for the International Health Terminology Standards Development Organization

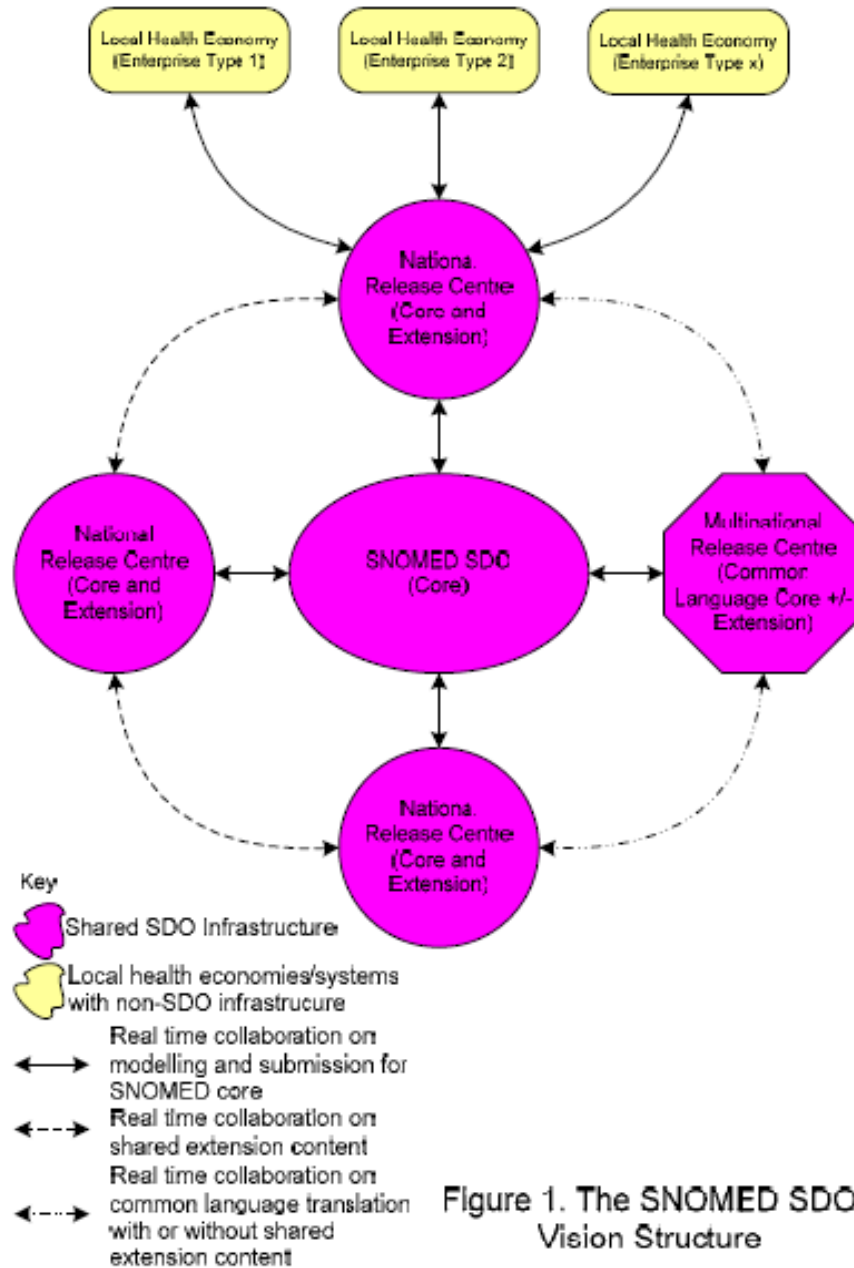
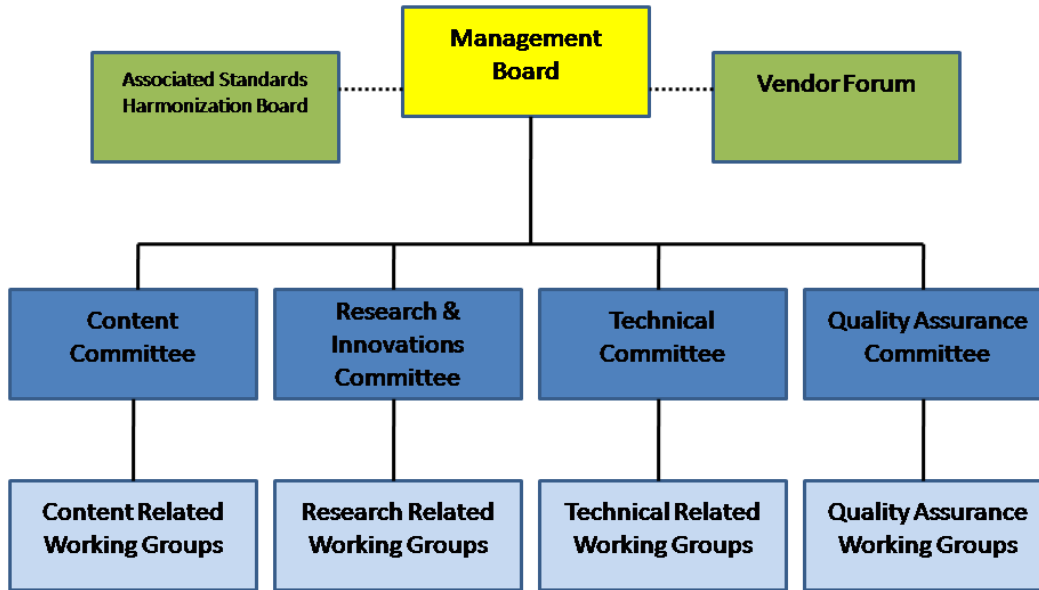


Figure 1. The SNOMED SDO Vision Structure

Proposal for Formation of a New International Pathology Working Group for the International Health Terminology Standards Development Organization

Fig 2. IHTSDO Organizational Structure



WASPaLM Societies

No.	Class	Country	Constituent Society	Representative
1	C	Australia	The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA)	
2	C	Austria	Österreichische Gesellschaft für Laboratoriumsmedizin und Klinische Chemie (ÖGLMKC)	
3	C	Brazil	Sociedade Brasileira de Patologia Clinica / Medicina Laboratorial	
4	C	Brazil	Sociedade Brasileira de Patologia	
5	C	Germany	Deutsche Vereinte Gesellschaft für Klinische Chemie und Laboratoriumsmedizin	
6	C	Germany	Institut für Standardisierung und Dokumentation in Medizinischen Laboratorium e. V. (Instand e.V)	
7	C	Germany	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Qualitätssicherung im Medizinischen Laboratorium e. V. (DGQML)	
8	C	Germany	Berufsverband Deutscher Laborärzte e. V.	
9	C	Hong Kong	THZ Hong Kong	
10	C	Ireland	Faculty of Pathology of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland	
11	C	Israel	Israel Association of Pathologists	
12	C	Italy	Società Italiana di Medicina di Laboratorio (SIMeL)	
13	C	Italy	Associazione Italiana Patologi Clinici (AIPAC)	
14	C	Japan	Japanese Society of Laboratory Medicine	
15	C	Japan	Japanese Association of Clinical Laboratory Physicians	
16	C	Korea	The Korean Society for Laboratory Medicine	
17	C	Malaysia	College of Pathologists, Academy of Medicine of Malaysia	
18	C	Mexico	Federación Mexicana de Patologia Clinica	
19	C	Romania	Romanian Society for Laboratory Medicine(Associate Society)	
20	C	S. Africa	National Pathology Group	
21	C	Switzerland	Foederatio Analyticorum Medicinalium Helveticorum (FAMH)	
22	C	Taiwan	Taiwan Society of Clinical Pathologists	
23	C	Turkey	Ankara Society of Pathology	
24	C	Turkey	TURKISH SOCIETY OF CLINICAL BIOCHEMISTRY	
25	C	Turkey	Turkish Microbiological Society	
26	C	UK	Royal College of Pathologists	
27	C	UK	Association of Clinical Pathologists	
28	C	Uruguay	Sociedad Uruguaya de Patologia Clinica (SUPAC)	
29	C	USA	College of American Pathologists	
30	C	USA	American Society of Clinical Pathology (Corresponding Society)	

FIGURE 3: WASPaLM Societies and Countries