



Representing and recording reasons for prescription using SNOMED CT

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Audience

Health care professionals, health information system designers and developers, terminologists, clinical coders.

Objectives

Gain an understanding of how SNOMED CT is used in a Swedish national project to facilitate the documentation of the reasons for prescription of medications in day to day health care.

Abstract

To know why a patient has been prescribed a specific medication is important for the patient as well as for the health care staff. The National Board of Health and Welfare in Sweden has developed a new, national knowledge base for reasons for prescription. This knowledge base will facilitate the documentation of the reasons for prescription in day to day health care. The term “reason for prescription” signifies the rationale for the prescription as specified by the prescriber, e.g. the disease or symptom to be cured or relieved by a specific drug treatment. The project is initially limited to drugs prescribed in outpatient care.

The reasons for prescription were derived from indications approved by either the Swedish Medical Products Agency or European Medicines Agency. The knowledge base contains links from medical products to reasons for prescription. To ensure that the system will not only be adaptable to different situations, but also that it's future-proof, a well-defined expressive terminology is needed. Therefore the reasons for prescription have been represented using SNOMED CT concepts or post-coordinated expressions.

The reasons for prescription, when recorded using a prescribing tool like the national prescribing tool Pascal, can be stored in the National Prescription Database (NOD). It is expected that any prescribing tool will be able to store information in NOD in the future.

This showcase presentation will explain methods used in the project to represent reasons for prescription, including terminological analysis and mapping to SNOMED CT, and strategies for implementation and maintenance of the system.