

# SNOMED Clinical Terms<sup>®</sup> Non-Human Reference Set Guide

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SNOMED CT has been created by combining SNOMED RT and a computer based nomenclature and classification known as Clinical Terms Version 3, formerly known as Read Codes Version 3, which was created on behalf of the UK Department of Health and is Crown copyright.

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## 1 Purpose

This document provides technical information about the Non-Human Subset distributed by the International Health Terminology Standards Development Organisation (IHTSDO) as a resource with the International Release of SNOMED Clinical Terms® (SNOMED CT®).

## 2 Who should read this Document?

This document is for any organization that wants to use this reference set. The intended audience includes system developers, health informatics specialists, and system integrators who want to use this reference set in a software application or terminology server.

## 3 Comments

Further information about SNOMED CT is available on the Internet at:

[www.ihtsdo.org](http://www.ihtsdo.org)

Please send feedback by email to:

[support@ihtsdo.org](mailto:support@ihtsdo.org)

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## 4 Acknowledgements

The IHTSDO acknowledges the significant contribution to the development of this reference set by the UK Terminology Centre. A previous version of the non-human reference set was developed with the help of the American Veterinary Medical Association and the Veterinary Medical Data Base.

## 5 Background

### What is a reference set?

SNOMED CT is an extensive clinical terminology for recording and organizing health care information. Global in scope, and with over 295,000 active concepts related to health care, SNOMED CT provides a “common language” with the depth to provide a consistent way of capturing, sharing and aggregating health data across clinical specialties and sites of care.

A particular use case for health care terminology, however, typically does not require all of SNOMED CT. Therefore, a reference set mechanism has been created that allows a selection of concepts, descriptions, or relationships to be extracted and used for an application. This same mechanism can be used to select concepts that need to be excluded from use in applications.

Reference sets are used, for example, to select terms for a particular language or dialect; to choose concepts relevant for a particular software application, screen, or field; and to change the hierarchical appearance of the terminology into a more familiar presentation.

### What kind of reference set is this?

SNOMED CT contains content which covers both human and veterinary medicine. The non-human reference set identifies 1,907 (up from 1,687 in the previous release) SNOMED CT Concepts used exclusively to represent non-human clinical concepts such as *Fin (body structure)*, *Transection of horn (procedure)*, and *Feline leukemia virus infection (disorder)*.

This reference set is *not* intended to function as a veterinary reference set that will identify all the concepts relevant to veterinary medicine, which would include thousands of concepts also relevant in human medicine, such as *Heart structure (body structure)*, *Venipuncture (procedure)*, and *Fracture of bone (disorder)*. Its objective is not to include all content relevant to veterinary medicine, but to enable implementers to exclude content irrelevant to human medicine from view in their applications. For example, this reference set could allow a browser to exclude non-human concepts from being displayed.

The Non-Human Reference Set has been refined to accurately capture most non-human concepts and continues to be revised as necessary; however, there is no gold standard for what is relevant in human medicine and what is not. There are many poisonings and infections, for example, that are typically relevant in non-human populations but in some circumstances may affect people as well. The Non-Human Reference Set should be taken as a starter which can be locally modified to meet the requirements of specific uses and applications.

## 6 Non-Human Content Overview

SNOMED CT includes content designed to support the requirements of veterinary medicine, and it supplies an extensive array of concepts for non-human disorders, anatomical structures, and veterinary procedures. SNOMED CT's veterinary content has been developed in consultation with the American Veterinary Medical Association and the Veterinary Medical Data Base.

## 7 Features

Most reference sets filter the full SNOMED CT terminology to extract a smaller and more manageable set of concepts for a particular use. The reference set works in the broader context of the full terminology. For example, while a reference set might define the group of concepts used for recording and coding medical data, the full terminology might be used within the same organization for sophisticated data access and analysis.

In contrast, the Non-Human Reference Set defines the set of concepts that are not relevant to the provision of human medical care. This allows that content to be excluded from the SNOMED CT terminology. By doing so, the reference set allows a user to isolate the terminology suitable for human medicine applications.

Again, the Non-Human Reference Set does *not* define the set of concepts that are suitable for the provision of veterinary medical care. Concepts that are useful in both human and veterinary medicine applications are not part of the reference set. Implementation of the Non-Human Reference Set is intended only to allow content that is specific to veterinary medicine to be excluded when SNOMED CT is being used for the provision of human clinical care.

A reference set can be customized for particular software systems or use cases. Note that a customized reference set may need to be updated as the SNOMED CT terminology and the Non-Human Reference Set are revised. If concepts are identified that should be added or removed from this general reference set, please submit these suggestions to the IHTSDO.

## **8 Benefits**

Non-human clinical concepts are integrated into SNOMED CT. The Non-Human Reference Set accurately captures most of these concepts, so that clinicians can filter concepts that are not applicable to human medicine.

## Appendix A. File Format, File Name, and File Location

**File format:** The Non-Human Reference Set follows the file structure of the SNOMED CT Simple type reference set pattern. See the table below, and refer to SNOMED CT Release Format 2.0 Reference Set Specifications for a detailed explanation of the SNOMED CT Simple type reference set pattern.

**File name and location:** The current version of the Non-Human reference set can be found as a set of rows included with rows from other simple type reference sets in the file named:

‘der2\_Refset\_SimpleSnapshot\_INT\_YYYYMMDD.txt’ (where ‘YYYYMMDD’ is the release date of the relevant International Release)

Located in the folder named:

‘\RF2Release\Snapshot\Refset\Content’

Rows belonging to the Non-Human Refset are identified by a common value in the refSetId field (see below).

Field	Data type	Purpose
id	UUID	A 128 bit unsigned integer, uniquely identifying the reference set member.
effectiveTime	Time	Specifies the inclusive date at which this change becomes effective.
active	Boolean	Specifies whether the member’s state was active or inactive from the nominal release date specified by the effectiveTime field.
moduleId	SctId	Identifies the member version’s module. Set to 90000000000207008 [SNOMED CT core module (core metadata concept)], within the metadata hierarchy.
refSetId	SctId	Set to 447564002 [Non-human simple reference set (foundation metadata concept)] for each row belonging to the Non-human Refset. A distributed refset file may contain rows from multiple different refsets.
referencedComponentId	SctId	A reference to the SNOMED CT component to be included in the reference set. In this case, these are the Concept SctIds of the concepts in the non-human reference set.