Sustainable & Green Strategies

SNOMED International Contributes Clinical Terminology as a Critical Key to Sustainable Healthcare

An overview of SNOMED CT – the most comprehensive clinical terminology in use worldwide and the benefits it offers for health systems globally.

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> **key points**
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> - SNOMED CT is a comprehensive, multilingual healthcare terminology created by healthcare professionals.
> - SNOMED CT can unite health systems with structured clinical terminology, enabling communication and understanding for better, more efficient patient care, data analytics and research.
> - Collaboration is a key component of SNOMED International's strategy to work closely with other standards and clinical bodies, professional organisations, researchers, academics, industry and others to improve the content in SNOMED CT.

SNOMED International, the not-for-profit organisation that develops and maintains SNOMED CT, participates in several initiatives that contribute to enabling more sustainable digital-based healthcare systems worldwide. SNOMED CT is a comprehensive, multilingual healthcare terminology created for use by healthcare professionals to capture the care of individuals in an electronic health record and facilitate sharing, decision support and analytics to support safe and effective health information exchange.

But what is sustainability in healthcare, and why is it important?

One facet of healthcare sustainability relates to managing the growing burden of age-related illness as an increasing percentage of the world's population gets older through prevention and treatment; others include managing the costs of delivering care and the human and other resources required and reducing the environmental impact of healthcare delivery.

Acknowledging the progress many countries have made in advancing digital health, as well as the outstanding challenges many resource-constrained countries still face, the World Health Organization (WHO) also recognises the imperative of sustainability

– environmental, financial and systemic – in improving access to and delivery of healthcare globally. Its Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020-2025 states that "digital health should be an integral part of health priorities and benefit people in a way that is ethical, safe, secure, reliable, equitable and sustainable".

Partnering for the Global Good

SNOMED International's vision is to make SNOMED CT the one language of healthcare globally. Uniting health systems with structured clinical terminology enables communication and understanding – all of which contribute to better and more efficient patient care.

In addition to a long-tenured membership model to extend the use of the SNOMED CT product and its related services, the organisation has made it a priority to provide affiliate licences for thousands of non-profit, academic and research users in non-member countries at no cost, broadening the use of SNOMED CT while also enhancing the digital health infrastructure of emerging and developing markets.

Collaboration is a key component of SNOMED International's 2020-2025 strategy. Working closely with other standards and clinical bodies as well as

professional organisations, researchers, academics, industry and others augments and improves the content in SNOMED CT to benefit a global population. Collaboration plays a crucial role in improving sustainability in healthcare by fostering the sharing of knowledge, resources, and best practices among various global stakeholders.

A Collaboration Project With Public Good Intentions

A recent SNOMED International collaborative initiative with the Bahmni Coalition is one example of how the organisation and its members are contributing to more sustainable healthcare. The joint project has produced a SNOMED CT module for integration with Bahmni's open-source electronic medical record to equip users with SNOMED CT's standardised clinical terms, enabling structured documentation of diagnosis and related clinical data, decision support and reporting.

Bahmni, a recognised Digital Public Good developed by global technology consultancy ThoughtWorks, is the preferred solution in many Asian and African countries and a strategic asset for many large humanitarian organisations. Built on the OpenMRS (medical record system) platform, it brings together

The organisation worked with member representatives to add most of the content to the September 1, 2023 release of the SNOMED CT International Edition. This content will make it easier for clinicians and providers to respond to their patient's care needs arising from a wide range of environmental conditions, to share that data more easily and use it for analysis and policymaking.

Focusing on the diverse aspects of sustainability is increasingly important to SNOMED International, its governing bodies and its stakeholders around the world. That includes how it works as an organisation to ensure its practices, policies, and activities meet the ever-evolving needs of its members, other users and its many collaborative partners so it can continue to deliver SNOMED CT in a way that promotes sustainability in all health systems for the long haul.

Conclusion

There will always be more that SNOMED International and other healthcare-focused organisations can do to further incorporate sustainability concepts and practices into their day-to-day work and future strategic plans.

Advocacy and leadership will continue to shape the path for the heightened pursuit of sustainability in health and digital health. Advocacy at local, national,

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essential functionalities, such as patient registration, appointments, recording diagnosis and procedures, billing, lab, pharmacy, and more, into one cohesive platform.

Supporting Patients Through Climate Change and Natural Disasters

Another example of SNOMED International's commitment to sustainability in healthcare is the organisation's recent efforts to quickly respond to requests for concepts specific to the real-world impacts of climate change and natural disasters on the world's citizens in the International Edition of SNOMED CT.

and international levels and leadership by example will inspire others in the industry to embrace sustainable, altruistic practices.

Ultimately, embracing these principles across the digital health ecosystem will foster a healthcare system that improves patient outcomes through our joint humanitarian efforts.

Conflict of Interest

None. ∎