Frequently Asked Questions about the SNOMED CT NCPT Reference Set

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1. What is a reference set?

- A reference set is a group of concepts used for a particular purpose. They share a specific characteristic (e.g., nutrition problems).

2. What is the SNOMED CT Nutrition Care Process Terminology (NCPT) reference set?

- The 2024 reference set contained the primary coding concepts from one of the most important aspects of the nutrition care process (NCP), the nutrition problem (diagnosis) that nutrition and dietetic professionals are treating. The problems are from the 2020 Nutrition Care Process Terminology (NCPT), which is available at www.nutritioncareprocess.org.
- The 2025 reference set contains concepts that map, or are associated with, NCP terminology in SNOMED CT, for nutrition diagnosis and nutrition intervention. At this point, a decision has been made to not include the nutrition assessment concepts in the reference set.
- U.S. and International nutrition and dietetic professionals volunteer their expertise and time to develop and maintain NCPT concepts and resources, which enable them to be included in SNOMED CT.

3. What is SNOMED CT?

- SNOMED CT is the most comprehensive international clinical healthcare terminology in use around the world, originating in 1965. This link provides basic information about SNOMED CT: https://youtu.be/Eqx21OSrGU0.
- SNOMED CT can be used in electronic health record (EHR) systems supporting evidence-based practice.
- Most countries identify specific terminologies that can be used in their electronic health record systems, and SNOMED CT is the most widely used terminology across the globe.
- Inclusion and release of a reference set of nutrition concepts in SNOMED CT is an important recognition of the contribution of nutrition care to health care.

4. What is the current state of including NCPT in SNOMED CT?

- The majority of NCPT (i.e., nutrition assessment/monitoring and evaluation, nutrition diagnosis, nutrition intervention) has been submitted to and is included in SNOMED CT.
- Nutrition and dietetic professionals, including Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) and Nutrition and Dietetic Technicians, Registered (NDTRs), are encouraged to advocate for and use the NCPT as the terminology for a front-facing computer user interface with the SNOMED CT mappings behind the scenes for data analysis.

5. What are the benefits of a nutrition reference set?

- The reference set lists the discreet coding terminology for nutrition problems (diagnoses) and nutrition interventions for nutrition and dietetic professionals to use in electronic health records (EHRs). In other words, each concept has a distinct meaning.
- Using a coding terminology, like SNOMED CT, helps promote care communication by using discreet concepts for meaningful exchange (interoperability) of nutrition content within and between health systems. This SNOMED video provides a brief introduction to why structured and coded data documentation and exchange is important: https://youtu.be/xOTs13ChZxs.
- A reference set can help guide quality measure developers and those implementing quality initiatives as it will ensure they properly constrain the quality measure and/or initiative value sets to only those codes available for use within the scope of the nutrition terminology.
- A reference set may help data extraction for research purposes when used in conjunction with a formal research data model, such as Observational Health Data Sciences and Informatics (OHDSI; www.ohdsi.org/data-standardization/), Informatics for Integrating Biology & the Bedside (i2b2; www.i2b2.org), and/or Observational Medical Outcomes Partnership (OMOP; https://fnih.org/observational-medical-outcomes-partnership-omop).

6. To whom is the reference set relevant?

- A reference set is helpful to various stakeholders, including nutrition and dietetic professionals, other health professionals (e.g., nurses, physicians), electronic health record (EHR) implementers, SNOMED member country national release centers, government and quality reporting entities, and researchers.

7. What's in it for dietitians? For other professionals?

- A reference set helps dietitians speak the same language and also share nutrition results.
- A reference set makes nutrition EHR implementations and updates easier by providing the exact list of concepts, in the case of the current reference set release, to name nutrition problems (diagnoses) and nutrition interventions.
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8. How are reference sets used?

- Nutrition professionals, in collaboration with IT professionals, use the nutrition reference set in EHR implementations and EHR revisions and/or updates.
- The initial reference set will help nutrition professionals and EHR implementers understand the specific nutrition and dietetic concepts to use in EHRs for a nutrition problem (diagnosis) and/or nutrition intervention list.

9. When will the reference set be available?

- The first reference set release, with nutrition problems (diagnoses), was available in April 2024. The nutrition diagnosis reference set is also available on the U.S. Value Set Authority Center: https://vsac.nlm.nih.gov/welcome (OID 2.16.840.1.113883.1.11.20.2.7).

10. When will the reference set be updated?

- The first update, in April 2025, contains the SNOMED CT identifiers for two of the three NCP terminologies (i.e., nutrition diagnosis and nutrition intervention), which will help with nutrition implementations and documentation of care provided in the NCP. Annual maintenance of the content is needed to ensure valid mappings when SNOMED CT content is changed or inactivated and/or when changes to NCPT content occur.

11. What is the content in a simple reference set?

- A simple reference set is a subset of SNOMED CT identifiers (known as SCTID). These are numerical identifiers for computer readability. There are no descriptions that are human readable in a simple SNOMED reference set. Also, there are no mapping to the NCP terminology in the SNOMED CT NCPT simple reference set.
- Using SCTID numbers only in the reference set means that each country can have human readable descriptions of SNOMED CT either as U.S. English and/or translated descriptions in their electronic health record (EHR) systems based on their country's approach to displaying SNOMED descriptions and/or local terminology descriptions.

12. Does the reference set replace the need for the Academy's NCPT terminology hierarchy and mapping resources provided in the NCPT (www.nutritioncareprocess.org)?

- No. There are important reasons why the reference set does not replace the need for the resources in the NCPT (www.nutritioncareprocess.org):
  - The Academy's terminology resources provide the NCPT descriptions that can be read by humans since the reference set only contains numerical values that can be read by a computer.
  - NCPT resources help show the relationships between concepts, also called the terminology hierarchy.
  - Mapping resources that are part of NCPT associate the SNOMED CT concept that can be read by people with the NCPT as the interface terminology.
  - In addition to SNOMED CT, several NCPT concepts also have LOINC (loinc.org; Logical Observation Identifiers, Names and Codes) mappings.
  - The Academy's resources provide definitions and valuable information for using the NCP and NCPT to improve and demonstrate quality nutrition care.

13. Who developed the reference set?

- The nutrition problems (diagnoses) and nutrition interventions are derived from the Nutrition Care Process Terminology, which is developed and maintained by U.S. and International nutrition and dietetic professionals. It is available from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics at www.nutritioncareprocess.org.
- The tools used to create and distribute the reference set are developed and maintained by SNOMED International (snomed.org).

14. Who is responsible for maintenance of the reference set?

- The responsibilities are shared between the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics/Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) and SNOMED International. The Academy and CDR maintain the NCP terminology and its definitions and resources, maintain maps between NCPT content and SNOMED CT terms, and maintain the SNOMED NCPT reference set content. SNOMED International maintains and distributes SNOMED CT and distributes the SNOMED NCPT reference set with SNOMED releases.

15. Is there an opportunity to provide input on the reference set?

- Yes! Questions and/or suggestions related to the reference set received by the Academy and CDR or SNOMED will be tracked. Academy and CDR staff are responsible for responding to queries. Questions received via the email address NCP@eatright.org will be added to SNOMED's tracking system for a response as appropriate; please contact info@snomed.org with questions.

16. Can professionals who have used the reference share their experiences?

- Yes! Groups are encouraged to share their experiences using the reference set by submitting them to NCP@eatright.org.

17. What are the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and SNOMED International responsibilities related to their respective terminologies?

- The nutrition content that the Academy submitted to SNOMED CT reflects the valuable contribution of nutrition to health care. SNOMED International is responsible for ownership, control, and distribution of SNOMED CT. Contact info@snomed.org with questions.
- The Academy is responsible for the ownership, control, and distribution of NCPT content and NCPT mappings to SNOMED CT concepts. Contact NCP@eatright.org with questions.

18. What can nutrition and dietetic professionals do to promote the adoption and use of the SNOMED NCPT reference set?

- Professionals in health care settings need to contact individuals in their organization who are responsible for EHRs and quality management initiatives to advise them of this important development. Standardization of approaches to care through the NCP and discreet terminology in the NCPT and SNOMED NCPT reference set improve efficiency of care, promote clear communications in care documentation and reports, and supports high quality nutrition and health care. New implementations and/or updates to current EHRs with the SNOMED NCPT reference set is advised.
- Professionals in technology settings can inform leaders in their organizations about the availability of the SNOMED NCPT reference set.

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