

National Health Data Dictionary

Summary edition

Version 11

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare is Australia's national health and welfare statistics and information agency. The Institute's mission is to improve the health and well-being of Australians by informing community discussion and decision making through national leadership in developing and providing health and welfare statistics and information.

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National Health Data Committee
2002

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
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Foreword

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare is pleased to produce the eleventh version of the *National Health Data Dictionary*, which is a vital tool for use in ensuring the quality of Australian health data.

In this time of constant change and with initiatives such as HealthConnect it is imperative that the health care community maintains the ability to standardise the terminology used in the analysis of health information. It is only through the cooperation and consensus of Australia's health sector that it is possible to produce in the Dictionary a set of core definitions and data items for use in all Australian health data collections. All Australian health departments, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the National Centre for Classification in Health, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Australian Private Hospitals Association, representatives of the private health insurance industry and the Health Insurance Commission cooperate in this endeavour.

Data elements in this edition continue to be presented in a format based on the ISO/IEC Standard 11179 *Specification and Standardization of Data Elements* – the international standard for defining data elements issued by the International Organization for Standardization and the International Electrotechnical Commission.

Use of the Dictionary will help ensure that data elements are collected uniformly from all services and jurisdictions throughout Australia and thereby improve the quality of information for community discussion and public policy debate on health issues in Australia.

The Knowledgebase (the Health and Community Services Metadata Registry) has been updated to incorporate this eleventh version of the Dictionary and is accessible via the Institute's Internet home page (<http://www.aihw.gov.au>). The full Version 11 may be referenced here. The Knowledgebase has become a standard form of release for the Dictionary and, as Internet access becomes more common, the requirement for this publication in hard copy has diminished. There is also increasing emphasis being placed on distribution by compact disc which not only has the advantage of being cheaper to produce, and less wasteful of resources but has the advantage of internal links that allow faster and more effective use of the reader's time.

Thanks are due to Joe Christensen and David Neilsen of the Institute staff who have prepared the material for this eleventh edition, and to all members of the National Health Data Committee who have overseen its preparation.

I urge all collectors of health-related data in Australia to use the Dictionary and so improve comparability and quality of Australian health data. The Dictionary content is expanding beyond institutional health care, and many of the new data elements relate to other sectors of health care.

Richard Madden

Director

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Preface

With the increasing pressure on the effective use of public money and the better use of web sites and CD-ROMs for dissemination, the decision was taken to publish in paper form a full version of the dictionary only every two years.

This is the first time in which this publication contains only a summary of changes to Version 10 of the Data dictionary- items that are added, updated or revised in 2001/02. Unmodified data definitions can be found in Version 10 of this publication. The full Version 11, including both the changed and the unchanged items is available on the AIHW Knowledgebase and on CD-ROM.

The next full hard copy will be Version 12 and will be published in 2003.

Your input is sought as to whether this format meets your needs.

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