

National health data dictionary

Version 13

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare is Australia's national health and welfare statistics and information agency. The Institute's mission is *better health and wellbeing for Australians through better health and welfare statistics and information.*

National health data dictionary

Version 13

Health Data Standards Committee

2006

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
Canberra

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Foreword

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) is pleased to produce the thirteenth version of the *National health data dictionary* ('the NHDD'), which is a vital tool in the collection and processing of Australian health data.

The NHDD is a national resource which health jurisdictions use to ensure the consistency and comparability of all data collected under the National Health Information Agreement. In this time of change, it is imperative that the health care community continues to standardise the meaning and representation of data used for both clinical purposes and statistical analysis. The use of the NHDD is an important step in this process.

Through the cooperation and consensus of Australia's health sector it is possible to produce a set of core definitions and data elements for use in any Australian health data collection.

All Australian health departments, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the AIHW, the National Centre for Classification in Health, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Health Insurance Commission, the Australian Private Hospitals Association, and representatives of the private health insurance industry, consumers and clinicians cooperate in this endeavour.

With the comparability of data collected based on definitions in the NHDD, information collected by jurisdictions throughout Australia can provide meaningful input to community discussion and public policy debate on health issues in Australia. The aim of such discussion is to improve the quality and safety of health care for all Australians.

The format of the data elements in Version 13 of the NHDD is different from that of previous versions. All metadata in this version are based on the 2003 edition (the latest edition) of the international standard ISO/IEC 11179. This edition of the international standard provides a more rigorous approach to the development of data definitions, thereby ensuring greater uniformity and less ambiguity in data definitions. Our implementation of this standard can be found in METeOR, the web-based metadata registry for storing national data standards used by the health, housing and community services sectors. Version 13 of the NHDD presents health data standards in a user-friendly and less technical format than what is available through METeOR.

Thanks are due to Trish Ryan, Meera Rajendran, Robyn Kingham Edwards, Alison Tong Lee, Shubhada Shukla and David Neilsen, AIHW staff who have prepared the material for this edition. Thanks are also due to all members of the Health Data Standards Committee who have overseen its preparation.

I urge all collectors of health-related data in Australia to use the NHDD and so improve the quality of Australian health data.

Penny Allbon

Director

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

How to use this book and the CD

The number of items in the *National health data dictionary* has grown significantly since the last full version published in 2004 (Version 12 with Supplement). This prohibits its cost-effective publication in hardcopy form. Also, the number of volumes of a hardcopy book would be such that it would be extremely cumbersome to personally carry around.

This thirteenth version of the NHDD contains all of the existing, new and modified nationally endorsed data standards in a new format based on the international standard ISO/IEC 11179 (see section on Metadata standards at the back of the book for more details).

With this in mind, the *National health data dictionary Version 13* consists of a single volume book and a CD-ROM.

The book

The book does not contain individual metadata items.

The book confines itself to:

- a table of contents for metadata items that may be found on the CD-ROM
- information about the governance of data standards in Australia
- a summary of the changes to the NHDD since its last publication
- details of the data collections (mandatory and non-mandatory) that use these standards
- ancillary information about the data standards
- a glossary of terms used in the book and the CD.

The CD-ROM

The CD-ROM contains the same information that is available in the book as well as detailed information about all of the metadata items that have been endorsed as 'Standard' by the National Health Information Group.

To use the CD-ROM:

- Insert the CD into your computer.
- It should automatically open to a start page.
- Click START.

The document is in PDF format.

Pages are searchable using the Adobe functions.

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