

# Multi-professional Terminology - a Common Language – for Needs Assessment in Social Services for Elderly in Sweden

Ann-Helene Almborg<sup>a,b</sup>, Ann-Kristin Granberg<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>National Board of Health and Welfare, Stockholm, Sweden

<sup>b</sup>School of Health Sciences, Jönköping University, Sweden

## Abstract

*The objective was to develop a multi-professional terminology for needs assessment in social services for elderly persons in Sweden. Qualitative content analyses of such social services acts and focus-groups were used to create meaningful concepts. These have been linked to the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) and mapped to the Systematized Nomenclature of Medicine – Clinical Terms (SNOMED CT). The results showed ten needs areas for needs assessment of social services. The needs areas are structured in a hierarchical structure according to the ICF. The conclusion is that ICF and SNOMED CT could be used for developing a multi-professional terminology to describe the elderly persons' needs of social services.*

## Keywords:

International Classification of Functioning, Disability and health, Needs assessment, SNOMED CT, Social welfare, Terminology

## Introduction

Today professionals in health care and social services lack a common language in the individual-based documentation. The National Board of Health and Welfare in Sweden shall support a development of a national terminology and classification resource. An individual-based documentation with uniform, unambiguous and comparable concepts, terms and classifications contribute to e.g. increased security for patients, users and clients as well as rational and effective information management in the health and welfare services.

This study is a part of the National Board of Health and Welfare's commission to develop official statistics within social services for the elderly. Elderly apply for social services and the assessment of their needs based on the application is an important part of social services. In the needs assessment professionals have to describe the individual's current state of functioning and the goal, i.e. the desired state of functioning, to decide the needed resources, to reach the goal.

The aim of this study was to develop a multi-professional terminology for needs assessment of older people's need for social services. Another aim was to investigate how the ICF and the SNOMED CT can support a multi-professional terminology.

## Methods

Qualitative content analyses of social services acts, regulations, handbook for social services, official statistics of social services in Sweden and focus-groups with professionals were used to create meaningful units and concepts. These have been linked to ICF and mapped to SNOMED CT.

## Results

The results showed ten needs areas for needs assessment of social services. The ten needs areas included eight chapters of the component activity in ICF. These chapters consisted of 35 categories on the 2<sup>nd</sup> level and 36 categories on the 3<sup>rd</sup> level. In addition, the 32 concepts on a more detailed level were used. The two other needs areas were a category of body functions for feelings of being safe as well as a category of environmental factors to describe support from relatives. Preliminary results showed that a great part of the used chapters and categories of ICF and the concepts of the more detailed level could be mapped to SNOMED CT.

## Conclusion

The results showed that ICF and SNOMED CT could be used for developing a multi-professional terminology to describe the elderly persons' needs of social services.

## Address for correspondence

Ann-Helene Almborg, National Board of Health and Welfare, SE-116 30 Stockholm  
e-mail: ann-helene.almborg@socialstyrelsen.se