

FACT SHEET

AUSTRALIAN CATALOGUE OF MEDICINES

Background

NEHTA Limited is a not-for-profit company established by the Australian, State and Territory governments to develop better ways of electronically collecting and securely exchanging health information.

Electronic health information (or e-health) systems that can securely and effectively exchange and use each other's data (i.e. be interoperable) can significantly improve how clinical and administrative information is communicated between healthcare providers. As a result, e-health systems have the potential to unlock substantially greater safety, quality and efficiency benefits in healthcare.

The Australian Catalogue of Medicines (ACOM) was formerly called the 'Central Medicines Data Repository' and the 'Pharmaceutical Coding Project', both conducted by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing. In 2005, the Department of Health and Ageing handed over the responsibility for ACOM to NEHTA.

Purpose

The ACOM has been designed to provide a national central repository for information on all prescription and non-prescription medicines, including complementary healthcare products, currently marketed in Australia. This includes details on the medicine's active and equivalent ingredients, medication form, container type, unit of measure, poison schedule, plant part and plant preparation. Each medicine is also grouped into a virtual medicine, based on the product's active ingredient, form and strength.

This data is stored in the National Product Catalogue (NPC) and powered by EANnet, a standards-based and multi-industry data synchronisation solution. Each medicinal product is uniquely identified using a Global Trade Item Number or GTIN. EANnet and the allocation of GTIN allotments are managed by the not-for-profit organisation, GS1 Australia.

Populating ACOM

The ACOM will be populated with data obtained from the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) with some additional information obtained directly from medicines suppliers. TGA data was selected as a source of information because it contains all medicines used in Australian healthcare. Medicines suppliers will still be required to verify the information collected from the TGA through a quality assurance process built into EANnet.

Quality assurance process

A quality assurance process has been designed within the NPC to ensure that the medicines data is accurate and reliable. This involves the medicines supplier checking and approving each of its medicines for release to medicines data recipients. NEHTA's Quality Assurance Unit will oversee this process, however the ownership and responsibility for medicines data remains with the medicines supplier.

Benefits

The ACOM will provide a central source of information for medicines data recipients. These include:

- Software vendors – prescription and dispensing applications;
- Owners of medicines databases – Australian Medicines Handbook, Therapeutic Guidelines, MIMS, AusDI;
- Researchers; and
- Government Health Departments.

All medicines data recipients will have access to a uniform and current set of data to utilise for various purposes. This will ensure that reference to medicines information will be consistent and reliable. Additionally, by maintaining one central repository, the need to maintain multiple data sources will be eliminated.

Relationship to other NEHTA initiatives

The ACOM is integral to NEHTA's Australian Medicines and Devices Terminology work by providing a continuous and up-to-date source of information on medicines in the Australian market that assists in keeping the terminology current with new and evolving medicines.

The ACOM is also closely linked with NEHTA's Supply Chain work which has the primary purpose of establishing a single source of product data that will facilitate e-procurement for public health facilities.

For further information go to www.nehta.gov.au

NEHTA's ACOM Contact

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