The Nursing Specialist Group

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Glossary

ASSIST

Association for Information Management for Staff in the NHS.

Aberdeen Formula

A mathematical calculation of the number of nursing staff required for hospital patients, based on categorising patients according to four levels of dependency.

Acupuncture

A system which originated in China where special fine needs are inserted into the body to produce analgesia, pain relief or to treat certain disorders.

ADT information

Admission, Discharge and Transfer information.

Authoring system

Computer-based software for preparing multi-media materials such as teaching materials.

Audit

An assessment and evaluation of written or computer-based records for a selected activity, it may be used to assess the quality of service offered to patients.

BMA

British Medical Association, a trade union for doctors.

Back-up

Duplicates of computer-based information, either on tape or as floppy disks, in case the original is damaged and unusable, or stolen.
Benchmark

A point of reference, such as a description of recognised good practice, used by others to measure and compare their performance as a stimulation to improve performance.

CAI

Computer Aided Instruction.

ccc

Centre for Coding and Classification. The NHS location for work on Read Codes and the Clinical Terms projects.

CISP

Community Information Systems for Providers.

Care profiles

A description of the stages in care and treatment which form the core activities associated with a defined patient group or clinical diagnosis. It may be used to audit and adjust activities to increase effectiveness or efficiency.

Case Mix Office

The location within the NHS Executive where the work is undertaken on diagnostic related groups and other methods for assessing the cost of providing health care and treatment.

Changing Childbirth

A programme of action to improve the experience of pregnancy and childbirth for mothers, initiated by the Department of Health.

Charter

A series of statements of what a citizen can expect of service from a government department.

Clinical workstation

The interface between the clinician and a computer system designed to ease the use of the system by using familiar objects as on-screen symbols, such as case notes for entering data about a patient's condition.

Clinical Terms Project

A NHS Executive project which collected the terms (words or phrases) used by different clinical groups in recording and communicating patient care and treatment. The Nursing Terms project ran from 1993 until 1995.
Code tables

Codes set out in table form for easy allocation to specific topics.

Colonoscopy

The examination of the lower bowel, usually performed with a flexible instrument.

Commissioner

The role taken within District Health Authorities where services are specified and purchased as part of the NHS reforms.

Community care

Relocation of people with long-standing illness from hospitals to accommodation in hostels or homes or sheltered housing where care is delivered day and night or by visiting staff.

Community Trust

An NHS Trust which provides community services such as health visiting, district nursing and midwifery to patients in their own homes.

Community Unit

A service within the community managed by a District Health Authority until replaced by an NHS Trust.

Diagnostic pricing

The charge levied on a healthcare purchaser for the care of a patient with a specific medical diagnosis or one which falls within a group of equivalent conditions.

Diagnostic Related Group

Medical diagnoses which have been grouped according to the estimated direct and indirect costs of providing hospital care and treatment.

Direct costs

The cost of staff salaries, meals, medicines and so on which can be directly attributed to the cost of an activity, such as nursing. The opposite of an overhead.

EDIFACT

Electronic Data Interchange For Administration, Commerce, Transport.
ENT
  Ear, Nose and Throat.

EPPIC
  Effective Purchasing and Providing in the Community. A programme of five integrated projects undertaken in Scotland.

EU/GATT
  European Union/General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

E-mail
  Electronic mail. The use of a network of computers to send and receive electronic messages or mail.

Elective work
  A term used to cover planned surgery and admission to hospital. It is the opposite of emergency treatment.

FHSA
  Family Health Service Authority. The local body responsible for purchasing primary medical care, optical, dental and pharmaceutical services. In April 1996 each FHSA was formally merged with a District Health Authority which purchased hospital and community care.

Fundholding
  A scheme in which GPs are allocated NHS money to purchase hospital and other care for patients registered with their practice.

G grade
  A clinical nursing grade for salary purposes usually allocated to the person with 24 hour responsibility for a hospital ward or for a group of patients in the community.

Gastroscopy
  Examination of the interior of the stomach using a flexible instrument fitted with lenses and lights.

Glycosylated
  The attachment of sugars to the haemoglobin in the red blood cells when the blood glucose haemoglobin is abnormally raised, used to assess the control of blood sugar in diabetes mellitus.
Go-live

Complete the introductory period and put the computer application into daily use.

Govan

A poor area of the city of Glasgow.

GP

General Practitioner. A doctor who provides primary care to around 2000 patients registered for such care under the NHS. Most GPs work in small groups.

Health Visitor

A registered nurse with an additional qualification whose main areas of responsibility are health education and the preventative care of families, including mothers and children.

Helicobacter pylori

A bacterial infection of the gut associated with peptic ulcers.

HIS

Hospital Information System. The introduction of systems to integrate and communicate computer-held information for patient care and the management of a hospital.

HIS Central Team

The team of experts set up to co-ordinate and monitor the Hospital Information System project which involved selected sites to develop and explore the issues involved in introducing different forms of HIS.

Histopathology

The examination of cells and tissues in the laboratory to aid in diagnosis of disease and disorders.

Hot key

A computer shortcut using two keys on the keyboard to gain access to a menu command, for example pressing the Alt key at the same time as the key corresponding to the first letter of the desired command.

ICD9

International Classification of Diseases version number 9. A system of descriptions and codes used to record the occurrence of medical diagnoses. Version 10 was introduced in 1995.
IM
Information Management. The way data is collected, analysed and the results disseminated and used. Images Pictures represented on a computer screen, including X-rays.

Informatics
The use of science, computer science, information and other technologies to provide data, information and knowledge to the individual and the organisation.

IM&T
Strategy Information Management and Technology Strategy set out by the NHS Executive for England and updated at regular intervals. It described the projects to be undertaken on behalf of the NHS and their planned introduction to health authorities and NHS Trusts.

Interface
The junction between two systems or parts of the same system. It may be used to describe the user and the computer screen and keyboard, or the internal components of a computer and items such as a printer.

IRC
Inter-Regional Consortium. Some health authorities chose to work together to develop and share early computer systems such as those for Patient Administration. (also Internet Relay Chat - Rod)

Korner
Named after Edith Korner who chaired a co-ordinating group to identify the items of data required to monitor the work of health authorities. A range of detailed reports were produced by the sub-committees, the recommendations were introduced and the resulting data used to develop health service indicators.

M25
Motorway number 25, it encircles London and became notorious for being unable to contain all the traffic that wished to use it, leading to queues and traffic jams.

Master file
A file of data which is the principal source of information for a job which is updated or amended as necessary.

MBA
Master in Business Administration. An advanced degree which became popular among managers in commercial organisations.
MLSO

Medical Laboratory Scientific Officer. Grade 1 is the lowest non-medical grade for staff who work in clinical laboratories such as biochemistry or pathology.

Microprocessor

A single computer chip which forms the main part of a computer - the central processing unit.

Myocardial infarction

An area of dead heart tissue (myocardium) resulting from a heart attack.

NHSTD

National Health Service Training Directorate. The body that was responsible for non-professional training, it provided distance learning courses including some related to informatics. Now transformed into the Institute of Health Service Development.

NPIG

Nursing Professions Information Group. Established in 1995 to provide an interface between the British Computer Society's Nursing Specialist Group, the Royal College of Nursing, the Royal College of Midwives, the Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association and the Department of Health to work on information management and technology issues.

NSG

Nursing Specialist Group of the British Computer Society, open to other health care professions and those interested in information technology for patient care.

OCS

Order Communications System. One of the initial components of a hospital information system, such as requests for blood tests to be performed by a laboratory, or medications to be dispensed by the pharmacy.

Outcomes

The end results of care and treatment, including the effect on the patient, relatives and the community. They may be descriptive, measurable and identified at specific points during or after an episode of health care.

Outliers

In healthcare the term is used in two ways. To refer to a hospital patient accommodated in a different ward from that specialising in the relevant medical diagnosis. The term may be used in the examination of data where results fall well outside the pattern for the majority of NHS Trusts with similar units.
Overhead

The general expenses of a business such as heating, lighting, a telephone system, which may be divided up by the number of patients treated and then added to the direct cost of treating a specific disorder as part of the total charge.

PAM

Professions Allied to Medicine. A term used to include groups such as physiotherapists, speech therapists and dieticians.

PAS

Patient Administration System. One of the earliest components of a hospital computer system which records the patient's name, home address, date of birth and each contact with the outpatient department or admission and discharge.

Pharmacology

The science of the nature and preparation of drugs and particularly of their effects on the body.

Picking list

A list of options on a computer screen from which the user can select items, for example a list of nursing terms used to compile a description of the findings of an initial assessment of a patient.

PIN

Personal Identification Number. A unique number used to identify one person, such as a nurse on the UKCC Register. It provides one level of security against misuse.

Podiatry

Treatment of the feet, including minor surgery.

Primary care

The first level of health care outside hospital, it may be given by a general medical practitioner, a community nurse, midwife or health visitor.

Process re-engineering

A recently coined phrase to describe making changes to the way in which an activity (the process) is carried out.

Prostatectomy

Surgical removal of part or the whole of the prostate gland found at the neck of the bladder in men.
Protocols

Used by managers to refer to an agreed description of a treatment process for a medical diagnosis. In computer terms it is used to refer to a set of rules governing the transmission of data between two computers that cannot communicate directly.

Provider

A term used in the reformed NHS to cover the delivery of healthcare. The main groups of providers are NHS Trusts covering one or more hospitals, clinics or residences for patients.

Purchaser

A term used in the reformed NHS to refer to health authorities and fundholding general practices which are allocated budgets from which to purchase services on behalf of patients.

Rab C Nesbit

A comic character in a television programme who comes from Scotland.

Read Codes

A system of coding clinical symptoms and treatment devised by Dr James Read while a general practitioner and purchased by the NHS for expansion and adaptation.

RSCN

Registered Sick Children's Nurse.

Rotating contract

A training contract which provides for sequential periods of experience at several sites or in different fields of medicine.

Resource Management

A NHS Project which sought to introduce computer systems into acute hospitals to help manage costs, including nursing staff costs.

Software

Programs, routines and procedures and the associated documentation which can be implemented on a computer system.

SAGNIS

Strategic Advisory Group for Nursing Information Systems. A group chaired by the Chief Nurse for England which advises the NHS Executive on the
appropriate strategy and related research for developing nursing information systems.

Standards

Agreed descriptions of the desired resources or performance to be achieved.

Skill-mix

The mix of disciplines and skills within those disciplines, required to deliver specific care to groups of patients. It is different from grade-mix but may be misapplied.

Syntax

Grammatical structure of sentences and terms.

Tonsillectomy

The surgical removal of the tonsils, patches of lymphoid tissue at the back of the mouth which may become chronically infected.

Transaction

The record of each piece of business performed. A transaction file for a day would be used to update the master file.

Version

The number indicates the frequency of improvement or additions, for example 3.1 is a more up-to-date system than version 3.0 or 2.5.