PROPERTIES AND UNITS IN THE CLINICAL LABORATORY SCIENCES

Coding scheme for clinical laboratories

Since 1995, the Commission of Nomenclature, Properties and Units (C-NPU of IUPAC and IFCC) has published nine papers on a coding system (i.e. a structure or a frame for the pairs of codes and meaning) and a coding scheme (i.e. the pairs of codes and their meaning), for clinical laboratories. "Meanings" can be descriptions of quantities which are measured or observed in laboratory medicine. A further four papers are now added with codes in the domains of Allergology, Microbiology, Pharmacology and Clinical chemistry. The codes offer a unique and sufficient information about the quantities and is therefore extremely valuable in the transfer of information between laboratories and to the end users of laboratory information. The codes make it possible to automatically translate the data to any language. So far the meanings have been translated into 18 languages, including many of the European languages, Arabic and Cantonese.

The coding scheme thus comprises a total of 10083 pairs with the international coding scheme identifier "NPU" for properties, and a further 13379 pairs for elements. These latter ones are for use primarily as results of taxonomic investigations; example:

NPU16294 Secr(Orophar)- Bacterium+fungus; taxon = ATCC12600(Staphylococcus aureus).ATCC12344(Streptococcus pyogenes).

NPU04062 U-Benzodiazepines; taxon = CAS846-49-1(Lorazepam); CAS439-14-5(Diazepam)

In order to test the functionality, the coding scheme has been succesfully mapped to the various codes which are presently used in 45 different clinical laboratories in Denmark. To accommodate local needs some new codes identified by 'DNK' have been added.

The domains presently covered by the IUPAC/IFCC coding scheme are Allergology, Clinical Chemistry, IOC prohibited Drugs, Microbiology, Pharmacology, Reproduction and Fertility, Thromboses and Haemostasis, Trace Elements. The schemes have been prepared in collaboration with professional groups and organisatons which represent the various specialities.

To be prepared are coding schemes for Molecular Biology, Blood banking, Tissue Typing, Inborn Errors, Tumor Markers.

The coding scheme is accessible on www.ifcc-iupac.suite.dk.

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Project 18/87

The following documents are avaliable for download as microsoft word for windows files. Due to their technical nature these documents are generally very long.