ICNP FAQs

1. **What is ICNP?**
   The International Classification for Nursing Practice (ICNP) is a terminology, a dictionary of terms, that describes in a uniform way different aspects of nursing practice – the things that nurses observe and the actions that nurses perform.

2. **Who developed ICNP?**
   ICNP is owned by the International Council of Nurses (ICN). ICN has also co-ordinated its development since 1989– however it is important to note that ICNP has benefited from the input of a great many nurses around the world. ICNP continues to evolve in order to ensure that it keeps pace with changes in nursing practice and wider healthcare.

3. **What motivated the development of ICNP?**
   The development of ICNP was motivated by the need to describe in an agreed way and across different regions key elements of nursing practice in order to support:
   - the meaningful comparison of nursing care
   - the identification of trends in provision
   - the appropriate allocation of nursing resources
   - the facilitation of nursing research
   - evidence-based policy making.

4. **How much does it cost to use ICNP?**
   ICN does not currently charge individuals or organisations for the use of ICNP for research and development purposes. ICN charges modest fees for all commercial use of ICNP to cover administrative costs. From September 2021, ICNP will be integrated with SNOMED CT. From this date, there will be no cost associated with the additional use of ICNP within countries that are members of SNOMED International, the developer of SNOMED CT.

5. **What is the new agreement between ICN and SNOMED International?**
   Under the new agreement, from September 2021, ICNP will be fully integrated with SNOMED CT which will ensure that SNOMED CT continues to reflect the valuable contribution of nursing to health care. SNOMED International will be responsible for the distribution of ICNP, while ICN will retain ownership and control of its content.

6. **What is SNOMED CT?**
   SNOMED CT is the most comprehensive clinical terminology in use around the world. Like ICNP, SNOMED CT can be used in electronic health record systems

for the benefit of patients and populations, while supporting evidence-based practice.

7. **Does the agreement between ICN and SNOMED International disadvantage nurses and patients living in low income countries?**

One of the guiding principles for ICNP from its inception has been to include nurses from around the world, regardless of the income levels of the countries in which they practice. Under the new agreement with SNOMED International, this principle holds through its progressive membership arrangement that considers, among other things, income level.

8. **Why is SNOMED CT relevant to nursing?**

Nurses do not practice in isolation. As a multidisciplinary clinical terminology, SNOMED CT has always included content that has relevance to nursing practice.

9. **We've managed for years without ICNP and SNOMED CT - why do we need them?**

Traditional paper-based approaches to managing health information have served nurses well at a relatively local level. However, under paper-based approaches, comparisons across settings has not been possible, and it has been challenging to identify elements of good and suboptimal practice. The introduction of computers into healthcare provides new opportunities for the more effective management of health information. An agreed language for nursing, such as ICNP, is needed to leverage these opportunities for the benefit of both nurses and patients. By embedding ICNP within SNOMED CT, nurses can be assured that their contribution will be recognised.

10. **Will the use of ICNP and SNOMED CT take nurses away from patients?**

While it is important to ensure that nurses have sufficient time to care for patients, the management of information is an important aspect of nursing. It is hoped that the introduction of good computer systems that truly support nursing practice will ensure an optimal balance of activities and any time spent away from patients will be used to maximum effect.

11. **How can I get my country to sign up to ICNP?**

If your country is already a member of SNOMED International, from September 2021, you will automatically be signed up to ICNP. If not, it is possible to sign up directly with ICN for use of ICNP.

12. **How might it help during the COVID-19 pandemic? Can it make a difference to my nursing care?**

The consistent reporting across countries of nursing findings through the use of an agreed terminology such as ICNP might allow both the early identification of potential cases but also the tracking of the potential spread of the disease. The consistent reporting of nursing interventions, in combination with nursing-sensitive outcomes, might allow the early identification and sharing of effective and less effective practice.

13. **What is your vision for ICNP in the future?**
    The vision for ICNP remains 'to have nursing data readily available and used in health care information systems worldwide'. Through ICNP, ICN seeks to support nurses, to help to transform nursing, and to drive and evidence improvements to health.

14. **How does ICN benefit from the agreement with SNOMED International?**
    As the leading advocate for nursing internationally, the main benefit for ICN from the agreement with SNOMED International will be an international nursing community that is better placed to evidence and articulate its key role in healthcare.

15. **Will there be changes to the current ICNP licensing arrangements for vendors?**
    If a country is a member of SNOMED International, vendors operating within that country are permitted to use SNOMED CT. ICN is currently reviewing the ICNP licensing arrangements for vendors in light of the new agreement with SNOMED International. In the meantime, licensing arrangements for the 2019 release of ICNP remain the same.

16. **Will ICNP 'disappear' into SNOMED CT?**
    ICNP content is being incorporated into SNOMED CT, but ICNP as a whole will remain identifiable as a distinct set of concepts. Under the agreement with SNOMED International, within non-member countries ICN retains the right to distribute ICNP as a separate product.

17. **Who will be responsible for maintaining ICNP?**
    Under the new agreement with SNOMED International, ICN remains responsible for new ICNP content. ICN is currently establishing new governance arrangements to assure the quality of new content.

18. **How will ICNP change under the new agreement with SNOMED International?**
    The core content of ICNP will remain the same following the transition. As there are small differences in the underlying architecture of ICNP and SNOMED CT, there will be relatively minor changes to the ICNP hierarchy following the transition - previous exploratory work suggests that this will not negatively impact data analysis. ICNP codes will be replaced with SNOMED CT codes, although it will still be possible to manage historical data through the existing equivalency mapping tables. And finally, legacy representations of ICNP, such as the 7-axis model, will be deprecated.