



Data Issues Brief

About the DIB

The *Data Issues Brief (DIB)* is VIREC's monthly publication that informs VA researchers on current news or updates regarding health data, databases, and medical informatics.

VIREC Announcements & Updates

VIREC Exhibit Booth at 2012 AcademyHealth Annual Meeting

VIREC is pleased to be attending the 2012 AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting in Orlando, FL, June 24–26. VIREC staff will be available at the VIREC exhibit booth (#203) throughout the meeting to answer researchers' questions about VA databases and information systems. Stop by the exhibit booth to learn about VIREC and the range of services and products VIREC develops and disseminates for VA researchers.

DSS NDE Data Transition

The Decision Support Office (DSO) announced in March, 2012, the decision to withdraw the Decision Support System (DSS) National Data Extract (NDE) SAS datasets from the Austin Information Technology Center (AITC) mainframe, effective October 1, 2012. The DSO will no longer produce DSS NDEs as SAS datasets. However, the DSS NDEs are, and will continue to be, available on the CDW in SQL tables.

VINCI and National Data Systems (NDS) are working diligently to develop processes to ensure that researchers have access to DSS NDE data without interruption. As a resource on research-related data issues for the HSR&D community, VIREC is working with them to help in the transition. VIREC will post a Web page dedicated to disseminating research-relevant information about the transition in early July.

Medical SAS Chronic Conditions Frequencies FY2007- 2011

VIREC Frequencies: Select Chronic Condition Diagnoses in Medical SAS Datasets, FY2007-2011 contains patient-level frequency counts for 27 groups of chronic condition diagnosis codes in the Medical SAS Inpatient "Acute Care, Main" and Outpatient "Event" datasets

Available on VIREC's website: www.virec.research.va.gov.

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VA Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW) Resource Guide

The *VIREC Resource Guide: VA Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW)* provides a general overview of the CDW including CDW structure, content and utility. This guide is an excellent starting point for researchers new to the CDW.

Available on VIREC's website: www.virec.research.va.gov.

Data & Information Systems

Dental-Specific Person Class Taxonomy Codes Updates

The X12 Dental-Specific Taxonomy codes have been updated in the National Patient Care Database (NPCD).

- The *Person Class Taxonomy* spreadsheet reflects these changes. (Available on NPCD's Intranet site.)
- The Dental Class Taxonomy code changes attachment in the *Audit Trail of Changes* on NPCD's Intranet site provides detailed information on changes to the dental codes.

Recently identified discrepancies between the X12 Dental-Specific Taxonomy codes, the Person Class Taxonomy spreadsheet, and the codes used by Dental Service have been reconciled. Users of the dental treatment SAS dataset managed by Dental Services and provided by the Dental Encounter System should make note of these updates.

Education

VIREC Cyber Seminars

Clinical Informatics Cyber Seminars

Date	July 24, 2012	11am Eastern
Title	<i>Web-based Patient Portal to Directly Elicit a Comprehensive Medical History</i>	
Presenter	Ann Walia, MD, Tennessee Valley Health Care System (Greenfield Awardee)	
Recently Archived	<i>The Prescription Opioid Documentation and Surveillance (PODS) System</i>	

Database and Methods Cyber Seminar Series

Date	July 9, 2012	1pm Eastern
Title	<i>Measuring Laboratory Use and Results Using the VA DSS National Lab Data</i>	
Presenter	Elizabeth Tarlov, PhD, RN, Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital	
Recently Archived	<i>Using VA Corporate Data Warehouse for Health Services Research</i>	

Register for a seminar or access archived presentations on VIREC's website: www.virec.research.va.gov.

E-mail questions to VIREC's Cyber Seminar Coordinator, Margaret Browning, at Margaret.Browning@va.gov.

Conferences & Calls for Abstracts

2012 AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting, June 24–26

The 2012 AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting (ARM) will be held in Orlando, FL, June 24–26. ARM brings together health services researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to address the critical challenges confronting the nation's health care delivery system.

2012 HSR&D/QUERI National Conference, July 16-19

The 2012 Health Services Research and Development (HSR&D) Service and the Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) will be held at the Gaylord National Hotel in the Washington DC area, July 16-19. The conference theme is "Transforming Veteran Healthcare through Partner-Oriented Research."

Visit HSR&D's website for details regarding this event:

www.hsrdr.research.va.gov/meetings/2012/

HSRData-L Listserv

Recent Topics

The HSRData-L Listserv is a forum for VA researchers and data users to exchange information, ideas, questions, and answers about VA data and informatics. Last month's subject lines included:

- Bed Days of Care in CDW
- Suspension of DSS NDEs on the Austin Mainframe
- Variations in DrugDesc with single IPNUM

Join the Listserv
Visit VIREC's Intranet site to
subscribe to the listserv.

VIREC maintains the HSRData-L Listserv, which is available to researchers and data users with a "va.gov" e-mail address. Archived discussions are available on the HSRData-L Listserv Intranet site.



VIREC Tip of the Month

What is a Health Factor?

A Health Factor is a data element in VistA that captures miscellaneous patient information not otherwise captured elsewhere, such as Family History of Alcohol Abuse, Lifetime Non-smoker, and No Risk Factors for Hepatitis C. It can be created locally and is not standardized across the VA.

A list of current Health Factors is available from the VistA Metadata Repository portal on the Data Architecture Repository Intranet site. (See the Intranet version of this *Data Issues Brief* for a link to the list.)

Health Factors data are available from the Corporate Data Warehouse.

This newsletter is provided by the VA Information Resource Center (VIREC).

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