
Record linkage

Important note: This is an archived metadata standard from the AIHW Knowledgebase. For current metadata standards and related information please access METeOR, the AIHW's Metadata Online Registry at <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au>

Identifying and Definitional Attributes

Data Dictionary: NHADD
Knowledgebase ID: 000762 Version number: 1
Metadata type: DATA ELEMENT CONCEPT
Admin status: RETIRED Effective date: 11-NOV-03
Definition: A code that allows the bringing together of two or more records, that are believed to belong to the same individual.
Context: The linkage of client records can be for two purposes:
1. To facilitate the provision of care or assistance, treatment, case management or administrative purposes relating to individual clients; or
2. For statistical purposes, including planning, accountability or research.
The proposed use of record linkage falls into the second category. Statistical record linkage is seen as one way of improving the measurement of client focussed outcomes. As a minimum, the use of record linkage is designed to make it possible to count the number of clients (without counting the same client more than once) and the services they receive.
Record linkage for statistical purposes, does not need to achieve a 100% matching of client records. The linkage of records only has to be sufficiently reliable to draw valid statistical conclusions. Statistical ?linkage keys? are most commonly comprised of some combination of standard personal information. This standard personal information is then compared across all client records to identify when two or more records appear to belong to the same person. The ?linkage key? in the proposed is comprised of the data elements Letters of Name, Date of birth and Sex. Once records are linked, the linkage key will be replaced by an encrypted code.
The linkage of client records, even for statistical purposes, raises some privacy concerns. The record linkage process should be consistent with the Information Privacy Principles (IPPs) contained in the Commonwealth Privacy Act (1988). Stringent ethical safeguards and procedures will circumscribe the record linkage process to protect client records from unauthorised access and to ensure that information is used only for purposes for

which is was intended.

Consistent with these standards a client's consent is required for the release of client information by service providers to other parties. With the introduction of record linkage in Housing programs, a client's consent to the release of information must be informed by the knowledge that information will be used for statistical purposes as well as for purposes related to their own care needs.

Relational and Representational Attributes

Datatype:

Related metadata: is derived from Date of birth version 1
 is derived from Family name/surname version 1
 is derived from First given name version 1
 is derived from Sex version 1

Administrative Attributes

Source Document: HACC Data Dictionary

Source Organisation: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Comments: Linkage keys have been developed or used in four community services data collections - the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) National Data Collection, the Home and Community Care (HACC) Minimum Data Set, the Commonwealth and State Disability (CSDA) Minimum Data Set Collection, and Reconnect (previously Youth Homelessness Pilot Project). Linkage keys are being used in these collections to provide estimates of client numbers, the amount of service provided or received and to measure multiple use of services. Multi-year longitudinal data sets are being developed in the SAAP data collection and the CSDA data collection using the linkage keys. The SAAP data collection uses a different statistical linkage key to the one defined here. Instead it is composed of:

? 2nd and 3rd letters of first name
? 1st , 2nd and last letters of surname
? M or F for male or female; and
? Year of birth.

Note: The proposed linkage key has a higher match rate than the one currently used by SAAP.

Data Element Links

Information Model Entities linked to this Data Element

Data Agreements which include this Data Element
