Current ISO/TC 215, Health Informatics Standardization Activity

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Abstract. The recent trends of a rapid implementation of the enterprise-wide information and communication technology in healthcare and wide-area health information sharing around the world requires an increased interoperability among different information systems. In 1998, the International Organization of Standardization (ISO) Technical Committee (TC) 215, Health Informatics was established to develop and harmonize International Standards (IS) for health informatics. This communication briefly introduces an overview of ISO TC 215 activities.

The ISO TC 215 consists of 25 ‘P’ (Participating: Europe-15, Asia-4, N. America-2, Oceania-2, Africa-2) and 14 ‘O’ (Observer: Europe-6, Asia-5, S America-1, C. America-1, Africa-1) member bodies. The P-member body must provide experts in developing IS.

Scope of TC 215: Standardization in the field of information for health, health ICT to achieve compatibility and interoperability between independent systems. Its purpose is also to ensure compatibility of data for comparative statistical purpose (e.g. classifications), and to reduce duplication of effort and redundancies.

Working Groups and Task Forces: The TC is organized with 6 Working Groups (WG), 4 Sub WGs and 2 Task Forces and they are listed below:

WG 1 – Health Records and Modeling Coordination
WG 2 – Messaging and Communications
   Sub-group 1 Architecture,
   Sub-group 2 Device interface,
   Sub-group 3 Methodology,
   Sub-group 4 DICOM persistent object
WG 3 – Health Concept Representation
WG 4 – Security
WG 5 – Health Cards
WG 6 – Pharmacy and Medication
   Task Force (TF) on e-Health and COPOLCO (Consumer Policy)

The ISO/TC 215 currently has fast track agreements with CEN, IEEE, HL7 and DICOM to enhance the process to bring regionally tested sound standards into IS.

Work Items: The TC has published 8 standards to date. Currently, there are approximately 75 standards under development in which a broad representation of current paradigm and multi-culture requirements have been met by the development processes. Approximately 20 medical device interface standards are being developed jointly with ISO, IEEE and CEN.

References
   www.iso.ch/sdis - Information specifically helpful to ISO standards development