Country Report Belgium 2016 : ICPC-2 related information activities in primary care
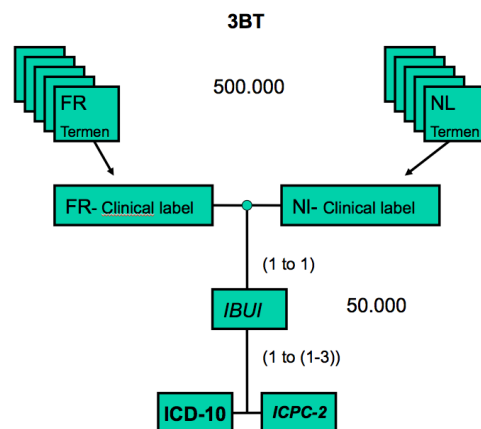
Current use of classification:

It is mandatory for electronic medical records (EMR) to have the ability to refer to a international classification concerning diagnosis to be certified by the government. The use of ICPC as a classification is promoted by providing the vendors of EMR the Belgium Bilangual Biclassified Thesaurus (3BT). This thesaurus contains clinical labels and search terms which match ICPC-2 labels and are the link to ICD10. Each French and Dutch clinical label has a unique identifier, the IBUI (Identification Belge Unique, Unieke Belgische indentificator) to make it bilingual.

However, a large number of mappings of 3BT are incorrect

(Verbeke M, Schrans D, Deroose S, De Maeseneer J. The International Classification of Primary Care (ICPC-2): an essential tool in the EPR of the GP. Studies in health technology and informatics. 2006;124:809-14. PubMed PMID: 17108613. Epub 2006/11/17. Eng)

GP's are now stimulated (financially) to register in a structured way within the EMR. Uploading of certain number of summarized electronic medical records (SUMEHR) will allow them to receive a lager "telematica" fee. But the use is happily not mandatory yet.

This raise significant ethical issues as the doctor could lose the control on the information transferred and therapeutic use only is not guaranteed. There are voices into the Belgian government saying selling personal data to pharmaceutical industry should be considered as this could implies lower price for drug.[i]

This 3BT is not updated anymore since 2010, last changes to the link ICPC-2 and ICD-10 are not reflected. There is no editorial board active and editorial work has come to a stop.
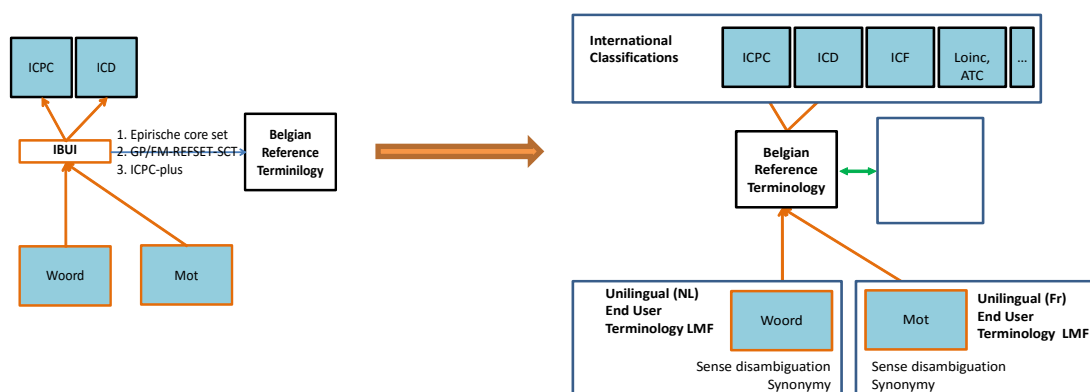
In 2014 an e-learning module (French and Dutch) was developed to make GP's aware of the power of their data and the use of classification, and what kind of change the implementation of e-Health will bring.

Further development in Belgium concerning the use of terminology:
Belgium has become an IHTSDO member since September 2013. A National release center is set in place. The government wants to use SNOMED CT as reference terminology for the whole healthcare. An eHealth platform has been rolled out, and available within the EMR of GPs. The development of a national reference terminology is an ongoing and slow process. Some use cases are available and some SNOMED CT concepts are translated in Dutch and French but are not yet validated and for the time being there is no Belgium edition of SNOMED CT.

Concerning the primary care a project is being set up to make a legacy conversion of the 3BT towards a multilingual end user interface terminology. The government is asked to make the necessary resources available.

The use of SNOMED CT into Belgium health care raises serious cultural and philosophical questions[ii]

Diego Schrans.
Marc jamoulle

[i] Vanoverbeke, D. (June 15. 2016). Revendre nos données au privé; "oui mais non." Le Soir, p. 6.

[ii] Jamoulle, M. (2016). Le patient, le médecin de famille et la SNOMEDISATION de l'information de santé. In *Université de printemps francophone en santé publique.17-20 mai 2016* (oral presentation). Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/2268/196936