

## **Confusingly names on medical devices, and how the GMDN brings much-needed clarity (which improves efficiency and safety).**

Each hospital uses thousands of different medical devices on a daily basis to treat their patients.

Trying to keep track of all these items of equipment is difficult when their names are clear and succinct. But often names are far from clear, with many manufacturers using widely different names for the same type of device.

For example, a carotid artery stent, used to treat the narrowing of arteries and thereby decrease the risk of strokes, is named by three different manufacturers as a “Closed Cell Self-Expanding Stent”, a “Carotid Stent System” and alternatively a “Nitinol Stent System”.

These devices are medically the same, yet sound completely different to anyone other than a specialist. Imagine this problem across each of the full range of complex products a hospital needs to treat patients in a modern health system.

On top of the sheer amount of extra time and effort needed for sourcing the right device and comparing alternatives, such confusion creates further complications which may lead to wrong devices being ordered and better alternatives overlooked.

This is where the **GMDN Agency** helps. The Global Medical Device Nomenclature (GMDN) standardises the name by providing an official term for each medical device on the market.

This also includes a five-digit code and a full definition, to further clarify important differences and similarities between products.

A simple example of this is a scalpel, which can be either single or multiple use. This is described in our database as:

- GMDN Term Name: Scalpel, single-use
- GMDN Code: 47569
- GMDN Definition: A sterile, hand-held, manual surgical instrument constructed as a one-piece handle and scalpel blade (not an exchangeable component) used by the operator to manually cut or dissect tissue. The blade is typically made of high-grade stainless steel alloy or carbon steel and the handle is often made of plastic. This is a single-use device.

Anyone seeking a single-use scalpel can go to suppliers and request items with the GMDN number of 47569 to confidently ensure they have the right item regardless of how it is described by the manufacturer or distributor. For other types of scalpel there are different codes to avoid any confusion.

The GMDN system and online database provide hospital staff with the information they need to determine the standard name for each device so every item of stock within a hospital's vast inventory can be clearly identified and organised using the GMDN, efficiently and accurately.

The global importance of the GMDN is obvious when you consider that the database is translated into over 25 languages. In many countries, the GMDN is required by the national regulator and therefore is growing in popularity with manufacturers and healthcare providers.

This supports communication between hospitals and international suppliers, and also helps reduce the dangerous misuse of medical equipment due to mis-identification.

Hospitals worldwide now benefit from the GMDN's consistent naming – very useful when your phrase book does not stretch to 'carotid artery stent'!