

Clinical Granularity

Clinical granularity refers to the level of detail and specificity captured in clinical data, documentation, or decision-making. It reflects how precisely and comprehensively a patient's condition, symptoms, diagnoses, treatments, and outcomes are described or recorded.

Definition

Clinical granularity is the degree to which clinical information is documented with fine, meaningful detail that supports accurate diagnosis, treatment planning, communication, and data analysis.

Examples

Aspect	Low Granularity	High Granularity
Diagnosis	Infection	Postoperative Staphylococcus aureus meningitis
Symptom	Altered mental status	Fluctuating bradipsychia with bilateral VI nerve palsy and Parinaud's sign
Imaging	CT normal	CT shows mild periventricular edema, Evans index 0.34, no midline shift
Medication	Antibiotics given	Vancomycin 1g/12h IV, adjusted for GFR 45 ml/min

Importance

- Improves diagnostic precision
- Enables personalized treatment
- Supports better coding and billing (ICD, SNOMED)
- Facilitates research and clinical audits
- Enhances inter-professional communication

Example in context

The lack of clinical granularity in the initial emergency department note hindered the neurosurgical team's ability to assess the progression of the patient's neurological deficits.

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