

# PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN USING A CLINICAL DATABASE FOR A LONGITUDINAL STUDY IN CYSTIC FIBROSIS

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## INTRODUCTION

According to Date (1982), p.7; "A database is a collection of stored operational data used by the application systems of some particular enterprise." In this definition 'enterprise' refers to a self-contained organisation such as a manufacturing company, bank, hospital, etc. 'Operational data' refers to information that is needed for the routine operation of the enterprise and is stored in a readily retrievable form. 'Application systems' are software dedicated to a specific task like invoicing, stock control etc. For the purposes of this discussion a clinical database is a database established and maintained at a hospital.

Typically the information (operational data) recorded in such a database consists of (Safran, 1991);

- patient identification (i.e. sex, age, address, date and place of birth, etc.)
- diagnosis and procedure codes
- laboratory data