

## News Release WHO/13

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The aim of the ICD is to categorize diseases, health-related conditions and external causes of disease and injury in order to compile useful health information related to deaths, illness and injury (mortality and morbidity).

The ICD had its origins in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was intended to categorize diseases for public health purposes. With its 6<sup>th</sup> revision in 1948, WHO became its custodian. ICD is the international standard for classifying mortality and morbidity.

Since the endorsement of the tenth revision by the World Health Assembly in 1990, ICD-10 has become the international standard diagnostic classification for all general epidemiological and many health management purposes. These include the analysis of the general health situation of population groups and monitoring of the incidence and prevalence of diseases and other health problems in relation to variables such as the characteristics and circumstances of the individuals affected.

The categories are also useful to support decision-making, reimbursement systems and for independent documentation of medical information. ICD-10 is used to classify diseases and other health problems recorded on many types of health and vital records including death certificates and hospital records. In addition to enabling the storage and retrieval of diagnostic information for clinical and epidemiological purposes, these records also provide the basis for the compilation of national mortality and morbidity statistics by WHO Member States.<sup>1</sup>

The *internet-based workspace* will document systematic reviews that obtain evidence from analysis of available data. WHO has established various Topic Advisory Groups to serve as the planning and coordinating advisory body for specific issues in the update and revision process.

These Groups are composed of renowned international health leaders and chaired by (hyperlink for the full list):

- Mental Health: S. Hyman (USA)
- External Causes: J. Harrison (Australia)
- Rare Diseases: S. Ayme (France)
- Internal Medicine: K. Sugano (Japan)

More groups are under construction. A Revision Steering Group will oversee the coordination and the overarching tasks and will be chaired by C. Chute.

WHO will run this platform in English. A Global Network of WHO Collaborating Centres will be able to run this internet application in Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish (UN Official Languages), while other languages may be supported by partners (such as in Japanese) to enable participation of all interested parties. These centres will also channel their national or regional proposals to the system.

WHO will collaborate through this platform with all interested parties, including governments and non-governmental agencies, academia, industry and public to make the new classification system best fit their needs. It is envisaged that there will be three distinct versions of the new ICD: a succinct version for use in primary care, a detailed version for use in specialty settings and an advanced version for use in research.

The website will be available as of 16 April 2007 to anyone to enter their suggestions.

**For further information, please contact:**

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<sup>1</sup> Source WHO Family of International Classifications <http://www.who.int/classifications/icd/en/>