

ICD-10-CM/PCS Part of a Global Network of Information Standards

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International classification systems, like ICD, are analogous to a river with local tributaries connecting to a global network of waterways, intersecting other classifications and terminologies to carry standardized health information around the world. With that in mind, it is clear how the US implementation of ICD-10-CM/PCS ties to the work of the World Health Organization–Family of International Classifications (WHO-FIC) Network, the organization that oversees the maintenance of ICD. During WHO-FIC’s meeting in October 2012, a poster titled “Implementing New ICD Versions in a Complex Environment: US Experience” won a fourth place award by popular vote. Developed by several US health information management (HIM) professionals, this poster described US ICD-10-CM/PCS implementation and education efforts, a topic of growing importance as the country prepares to implement its own ICD tributary with ICD-10-CM and ICD-10-PCS on October 1, 2014.

Building a Classification Family

The WHO constitution mandates the production of international classifications on health so that there is a consensual, meaningful, and useful framework that governments, providers, and consumers can use as a common language. The WHO-FIC Network is responsible for developing, disseminating, implementing, and updating the WHO Family of International Classifications to support national and international health information systems, statistics, and evidence. ICD (International Classification of Diseases and Health Problems) and ICF (International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health) are members of the WHO Family of International Classifications. ICD is the global health information standard for mortality and morbidity statistics, allowing the world to compare and share health information using a common language, and is the foundation for the identification of global health trends and statistics.

ICD-10 is the current international version of ICD, and ICD-10-CM is the US clinical modification of ICD-10. An additional member of the WHO Family of International Classifications is under development, the International Classification of Health Interventions (ICHI). Though the US will use ICD-10-PCS to code procedures, there is no international procedure classification in use. ICHI has a wider scope than procedures alone, as it aims to cover various types of interventions used in the healthcare delivery system, including medical/surgical, diagnostic, nursing, rehabilitation, primary care, traditional medicine, assistance and support, and public health interventions. The addition of ICHI to the WHO Family of International Classifications aims to harmonize existing national procedure classifications, such as ICD-10-PCS, and provide a basic system for countries that have not developed their own procedure classification system.

WHO-FIC a Collaborative Effort

The WHO-FIC Network holds invitation-only meetings annually and is comprised of WHO, designated WHO-FIC Collaborating Centers, and the WHO regional offices. The WHO-FIC Collaborating Centers are an international network of expert centers in health classifications, coding, and terminology development. The Collaborating Centers support WHO in the provision, use, and implementation of meaningful health information standards to provide high-quality and timely information for health planning and monitoring.

These standards cover information areas such as mortality, morbidity, disability, case mix, primary care, quality, patient safety, and traditional medicine. Business is conducted at WHO-FIC meetings through working meetings of committees and work groups, plenary sessions, and ad hoc meetings to advance specific WHO-FIC tasks.

The work of the WHO-FIC Network is carried out through several committees and reference groups. Committees include:

- Family Development Committee

- Education and Implementation Committee
- Informatics and Terminology Committee
- Update and Revision Committee

Reference groups include:

- Functioning and Disability Reference Group
- Mortality Reference Group
- Morbidity Reference Group

Each group and committee includes a specialist in each specific area. The Morbidity Reference Group, for instance, is currently in recess so that international morbidity experts can focus on contributing to the development of ICD-11.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) serves as the WHO-FIC Collaborating Center for North America. The North American Collaborating Center (NACC) was established in 1976 to represent the US and Canada in international activities related to the study and revision of ICD. In 1993, the NACC also assumed responsibility for work in North America on the ICF.

The NACC maintains liaison with WHO on US and Canadian government use, implementation, and maintenance of the Family of International Classifications. The NACC coordinates activities in three major aspects of classification-mortality, morbidity, and disability-and works with the other Collaborating Centers to promote and coordinate ICD and ICF applications.

In addition to representatives from the designated Collaborating Centers, other classification, health information, and clinical experts can be appointed by the Collaborating Centers to represent their respective countries on committees and reference groups. Representatives from the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) were appointed by NCHS to participate on the Education and Implementation Committee, Informatics and Terminology Committee, and Morbidity Reference Group. Additionally, an AHIMA representative was appointed as the Secretariat to the Morbidity Topic Advisory Group, a group that is contributing to the development of ICD-11 by ensuring that ICD-11 meets morbidity reporting uses. In addition to participating in the meetings and conference calls of the groups to which they are appointed, the AHIMA representatives participate in the annual WHO-FIC Network meeting.

AHIMA's participation adds value by providing the perspective of health information management practice to the process of development and maintenance of the WHO Family of Classifications, contributing to the WHO-FIC Network's efforts to promote the provision, use, and implementation of meaningful health information standards, and advocating for the use of standard international classifications that support global health information needs-including those in the US. The International Federation of Health Information Management Associations (IFHIMA), of which AHIMA is a member, is officially recognized by WHO as a non-governmental organization playing a key role in ICD implementation and HIM education around the globe. Additional information is available at www.ifhima.org, including details about the 17th IFHIMA Congress held in May. At the conference, AHIMA members contributed several papers and presentations.

The Future of ICD

Development of the next version of ICD, ICD-11, is already underway with completion expected in 2015. WHO has invited researchers, health information managers, healthcare providers, and other interested parties to comment on the ICD-11 classification structure, content, and implementation, and to make proposals to change ICD categories, to propose disease definitions, to participate in field testing, and to contribute to language translation. Experts and stakeholders can participate in ICD-11 development through a web-based platform: <http://apps.who.int/classifications/icd11/browse/f/en>.

Input from multiple stakeholders will increase consistency, comparability, and utility of the classification. This shared process is expected to lead to a global consensus on how diseases and health-related problems are defined and recorded. This is an opportunity to be part of an international collaboration that will lead to more consistent and systematic collection of health information.

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