FAQs for ICD-11

What is the International Classification of Diseases (ICD)?
The International Classification of Diseases (ICD) is the world’s standard tool to capture mortality and morbidity data. It organizes and codes health information that is used for statistics and epidemiology, health care management, allocation of resources, monitoring and evaluation, research, primary care, prevention and treatment. It helps to provide a picture of the general health situation of countries and populations.

The 11th version is now being developed through an innovative, collaborative process. For the first time WHO is calling on experts and users to participate in the revision process through a web-based platform. The outcome will be a classification that is based on user input and needs.

Who uses it?
Users include physicians, nurses, other providers, researchers, health information managers and coders, health information technology workers, policy-makers, insurers and patient organizations.

All Member States use the ICD and it has been translated into 43 languages. Most countries (117) use the system to report mortality data, a primary indicator of health status.

All Member States are expected to use the most current version of the ICD for reporting death and disease statistics (according to the WHO Nomenclature Regulations adopted by the World Health Assembly in 1967).

Why is the ICD important?
The ICD is important because it provides a common language for reporting and monitoring diseases. This allows the world to compare and share data in a consistent and standard way – between hospitals, regions and countries and over periods of time. It facilitates the collection and storage of data for analysis and evidence-based decision-making.

Why is the ICD being revised?
The ICD is being revised to better reflect progress in health sciences and medical practice. In line with advances in Information technology, ICD-11 will be used with electronic health applications and information systems.

What are features of this revision?
1. ICD-11 revision process allows for collaborative web-based editing that open to all interested parties. To assure quality it will be peer reviewed for accuracy and relevance.
2. It will be free to download online for personal use (and in print form for a fee).
3. It will be available in multiple languages.
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4. Definitions, signs and symptoms, and other content related to diseases will be defined in a structured way so it can be recorded more accurately
5. It is compatible with electronic health applications and information systems.

How do I participate in the ICD-11 revision?
Experts and stakeholders are invited to make comments, proposals and take part in field testing of the revised classification. Those who participate will have the opportunity to make structured input that will be peer reviewed by experts in the field. WHO welcomes the active participation of researchers, health information managers, health care providers, and others interested in the classification.

Directions for how to participate in the revision process are available on the revision’s online platform.

Why is my input important?
Because diverse health perspectives and knowledge from every part of the world will build a better classification based on the user’s needs. The input from multiple parties will increase consistency, comparability and utility of the classification.

This shared process will lead to a global consensus on how diseases and health-related problems are defined and recorded. This is a chance to be part of international collaboration that will lead to more consistent and systematic collection of health information.

How do I get started?
To get started, register for a participant account on the web portal. The web portal will be open for comments over the next three years and accepted changes will be reflected immediately.

When you register, you will be able to:

1. Make comments - on the classification structure, content and its implementation
2. Make proposals to change ICD categories
3. Propose definitions of diseases
4. Participate in field testing
5. Contribute to language translations

Register to participate in ICD-11