

Uses of Coded Clinical Data

Where it all began

Collecting health information is nothing new. The classification of diagnostic information began in the 1850's and focused on capturing information related to death. At that time, a classification known as "The International List of Causes of Death" was developed.

The method of capturing mortality information was adopted by the International Statistical Institute in 1893. The World Health Organization (WHO) took over the responsibility for the *International Classification of Diseases* (ICD) in 1948, and the classification was expanded to include morbidity (diseases and conditions affecting the patient). In 1967, the World Health Assembly adopted the use of the ICD, for use for mortality and morbidity statistics for all member states. ICD became the international standard for diagnostic classification for general epidemiological, health management and clinical uses.

A (statistical) classification provides a system for the ordering and hierarchical grouping of concepts in a given domain for statistical purposes. The grouping of concepts is driven by a purpose for which the classification is designed. A classification is a set of mutually exclusive categories to aggregate data at a prescribed level of specialisation for a specific purpose and have residual classes (i.e. 'other specified' and 'unspecified') to ensure that all cases can be classified.

Classification data is used for the analysis of general health situations of population groups, and for monitoring of the incidence and prevalence of diseases and other health problems. The data can also be utilised for reimbursement applications, resource allocation, quality of care and patient safety assessment, and clinical guidelines. In addition, classification data provides the basis for the compilation of national mortality and morbidity statistics for WHO member states.

Uses of ICD coded data

Once collected, ICD classification data can be used by health care providers and decision makers, to monitor the health of individuals and populations, as well as contribute to the analysis of the health system.

Users may include:

- healthcare institutions or practitioners
- government
- professional associations
- researchers or epidemiologists

Some of the specific ways in which coded data are used include:

- disease trending by demographic group or geographic area
- specific disease registries (i.e. cancer or injuries)
- mortality statistics
- surveillance of public health issues
- hospital utilisation
- resource allocation based on homogenous diagnostic groups (such as Diagnosis-Related Groups (DRG's), or Case Mix Groups (CMG's))
- analyses undertaken to determine how the health system is functioning and performing, for example, classification data can be used to track incidence of complications of medical or surgical care.

The World Health Organization (WHO) collaborating centres for the Family of International Classifications (WHO-FIC) are an international network of expert centres in health classifications, coding and terminology development.

The mission of the WHO-FIC Network is to improve health through the ongoing development of an integrated suite of health classifications and related products that produce information of value and utility across the world. The principal role of the WHO-FIC network is to promote the implementation and use of the Family of International Classifications in health information systems.

The Family includes three core (“reference”) classifications. The *International Statistical Classifications of Diseases and Related Health Problems* (ICD), which is used to classify diseases and related health problems, such as symptoms and injury. Functioning is classified separately in the *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health* (ICF) together with environmental factors. The third reference classification, the *International Classification of Health Interventions* (ICHI), is in the final stages of development and classifies health interventions delivered across all sectors of the health system. The objective is promote the use of all the classifications together in order to describe the patient’s diseases and health conditions, treatment or care provided as well as the patient’s functioning and disability status.

The WHO’s ongoing mission is to expand and improve the collection of global information related to diseases and health conditions reflects the importance of working to improve the capture of the diseases affecting our populations, so that decision makers can act in a timely and efficient manner to provide care, and whenever possible, to prevent disease and injury.

Contact Information:

WHO-FIC Education and Implementation Committee

E: eicsecretariatwhofic@gmail.com

W: www.hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/WHO_FIC_EIC/grouphome