

ICD-11 Fact Sheet

The international reference classification for health data — a freely available global public good, mandated by the World Health Assembly, in operational use worldwide.

Key facts

- **Global public good.** ICD-11 is freely available under a Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivs 3.0 IGO licence — no user fees, no membership fees, no country tiers.
- **In operational use at scale.** 132 countries are at various stages of implementation. The ICD-11 API serves 4 million requests per day. Over the past three months, 70 000 death certificates were processed through the API.
- **The lead classification of the WHO Family of International Classifications (WHO-FIC),** alongside the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) and the International Classification of Health Interventions (ICHI).
- **Digitally native.** ICD-11 is designed for integration into electronic health records, national health information systems, and emerging digital public infrastructure such as the Global Digital Health Certification Network (GDHCN) and digital health wallets.
- **Multilingual and participatory.** 10 official language versions are released and 25 are in preparation. More than 18 000 proposals have been processed from contributors in 99 countries through the open maintenance platform.

What is ICD-11?

The International Classification of Diseases, 11th Revision (ICD-11) is the international reference classification for health-influencing conditions and factors. It is mandated by the WHO Constitution (Articles 2(s), 21(b), 22 and 64), the WHO Nomenclature Regulations (WHA20.18), and successive World Health Assembly resolutions including WHA54.21 (ICF) and WHA72.15 (ICD-11). ICD-11 came into effect on 1 January 2022.

ICD-11 supports the recording, reporting and analysis of mortality and morbidity data across primary, secondary and tertiary care, and informs regulation, epidemiology, clinical research and health financing. It combines a statistical classification with an embedded clinical terminology in a single integrated system — more than 17 000 diagnostic categories, a foundation component carrying clinical detail and synonymy, and a search algorithm processing over 1.6 million terms in multiple languages. ICD-11 is accessible online and offline through free software.

ICD-11 at a glance

132 countries implementing · 4 million API requests per day · 70 000 death certificates processed via API in three months
· 250 000 offline package downloads · 10 official languages released, 25 in preparation · 18 000 proposals processed from 99 countries.

ICD-11 within the WHO Family of International Classifications

ICD-11 is the lead reference classification of WHO-FIC. Two further reference classifications complete the family:

- **ICF** — the international standard for the description and measurement of human functioning and disability, increasingly central to rehabilitation, ageing and disability policy.
- **ICHI** — the developing international classification of health interventions, including a module under development for traditional medicine interventions.

Together, the three classifications make it possible to describe, in a single coherent and freely available framework, what conditions a person has, how they function, and what was done for them.

Designed for digital health

ICD-11 is built for the digital health environment. The classification, its coding tool, its translation infrastructure, and its mortality and morbidity coding software — including DORIS for cause-of-death documentation and CodeFusion for streamlined coding workflows — are all delivered through APIs and supported web services. ICD-11 content is structured for use in FHIR-based exchange, in the International Patient Summary, and as the coded payload of digital health wallets and verified credentials carried through the Global Digital Health Certification Network.

Key features

- **Improved precision** for antimicrobial resistance, cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, HIV, mental health and rare diseases, with postcoordination and the embedded foundation component allowing fine clinical specificity beyond the 17 000 stem codes.
- **New chapters** on Diseases of the Immune System, Sleep-Wake Disorders, Conditions Related to Sexual Health, and an optional chapter on Traditional Medicine Conditions.
- **Postcoordination with extension codes** for laterality, severity, anatomy, substances, devices and other detail, allowing flexible specificity without inflating the core classification.
- **Suitable for clinical documentation**, with clinical qualifiers for suspected, probable, confirmed, ruled-out, personal and family history — supporting the documentation of the diagnostic process and not only its conclusions.
- **Coverage across primary, secondary and tertiary care**, with use in clinical documentation, clinical decision support, public health surveillance, mortality coding and reimbursement.
- **Consistent injury and external-cause coding** for international comparability in safety and policy.
- **Open maintenance platform** enabling transparent, evidence-based updates submitted by Member States, scientific societies and individual experts.

Benefits for countries

- **Sovereignty of health data.** ICD-11 is governed by Member States through the World Health Assembly and the WHO-FIC Network. Countries are not dependent on a terminology owned or controlled outside the public sector.
- **No licence fees.** Implementation, integration, vendor use and national adaptation incur no payment to WHO.
- **Fit for every health system.** ICD-11 is in operational use in settings ranging from national digital health infrastructure to paper-based primary care, with offline tools, simplified coding interfaces, and language support that do not assume high-income IT environments.
- **Data-driven policy.** Standardised, internationally comparable data supports the targeting of resources to where they are most needed.
- **Global comparability.** ICD-11 enables countries to compare health data across borders and over time.
- **Resilience.** Detailed, timely classification supports rapid response to emerging health threats.
- **Participation.** The proposal platform allows every country to contribute to the continued refinement of the classification.

WHO support for implementation

Countries are supported by a network of partners coordinated through WHO:

- **WHO at all three levels** — country offices, regional offices and headquarters — coordinates engagement with ministries and links them to technical support.
- **The WHO-FIC Network** brings together the WHO Collaborating Centres on Classifications and Terminologies and non-State actors in official relations with WHO, working through committees, reference groups and the annual WHO-FIC Network meeting. The Network supports countries with coder training, mapping, translation review, quality assessment and the exchange of implementation experience.
- **Other technical and academic partners** contribute to translation, training materials and integration tools.

WHO Headquarters can be reached at icd@who.int.

A foundation, now

ICD-11 is now in its operational phase. It is embedded in national mortality reporting, integrated with electronic health records, and serving as the coded payload for the digital public infrastructure that countries are building — from health data spaces to verified credentials and digital health wallets. The investments made by Member States in digital health are reaching the point where the choice of underlying classification and terminology has direct, measurable consequences for what data can be exchanged, compared and acted on.

ICD-11 provides a stable, freely available, internationally governed foundation for health information — fit for use in every country, in every language, and in every setting from primary care to advanced clinical environments. It is ready for the systems being built today.

For ICD-11 — browser, tools, downloads and APIs: <https://icd.who.int>

For the WHO Family of International Classifications:
<https://www.who.int/standards/classifications>



icd.who.int