

The International Classification of Diseases: purpose and uses

The International Classification of Diseases (ICD) is the foundation for the identification of health trends and statistics globally, and the international standard for reporting diseases and health conditions. It is the diagnostic classification standard for all clinical and research purposes. It defines the universe of diseases, disorders, injuries and other related health conditions, listed in a comprehensive and hierarchical fashion [9]. The latest version, ICD-11, is available for member states to report with from January 2022.

The ICD-11 classification for the first time included chronic pain ("chronic pain is pain that persists or recurs for longer than three months") and divided the coding into Chronic Primary Pain ("chronic primary pain is multifactorial: biological, psychological and social factors contribute to the pain syndrome") and a number of Chronic Secondary Pain conditions (related to cancer, post-surgical, musculoskeletal, visceral, neuropathic, headache/orofacial, other).

The significance of the inclusion of Chronic Pain as a condition within the ICD-11 should not be underestimated. There are, however, unresolved issues regarding this classification, such as when a condition ends and pain persists, does the term Chronic Secondary Pain become Chronic Primary Pain? [10, 11]. Similarly, the contents of recent drafted National Institute for Health and Care excellence (NICE) guidelines [12] (<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/GID-NG10069/documents/draft-guideline>), were found to be contentious as the guideline considered all Chronic Primary Pain as being essentially the same and the 'biological' nature of the pain appeared to have been missed. Whereas in the final guidelines this may be corrected, it does illustrate the risk behind the term Chronic Primary Pain.

The panel have changed the EAU terminology previously used in the Guidelines to show conformity with ICD 11 definitions. This will include changing terminology used in originally cited works.