



## World Health Organization Marketing and Dissemination

# The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health – ICF

*“Looking beyond mortality and disease  
– a common language to describe health”*

As a new member of WHO Family of International Classifications, ICF describes health and health-related domains as body functions and structures, activities and participation. The domains are classified from body, individual and societal perspectives. Since an individual's functioning and disability occurs in a context, ICF also includes a list of environmental factors.

ICF is useful to understand and measure health outcomes. It can be used in clinical settings, health services or surveys at the individual or population level. Thus ICF complements *ICD-10*, *The International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems* and therefore is looking beyond mortality and disease.

## ICF and ICD-10

ICF and ICD-10 are complementary and together they form the WHO Family of International Classifications.

ICD-10 provides a “diagnosis” of diseases, disorders or other health conditions, and it is enriched by ICF which provides additional information on functioning.

Together, information on diagnosis (ICD-10) plus functioning (ICF) provides a broader and more meaningful picture of health of people or populations and allows more rational allocation decisions and evidence-based policy making.

### Book

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**ICF identifies  
'components of health'**

**ICF is a standard  
language for health  
and health-related  
states**

**ICF enables users to  
record individuals'  
functioning, disability  
and health in various  
domains in a similar  
way across cultures**

## ICF was endorsed by the 54th World Health Assembly for international use

### Definitions

ICF provides a detailed classification with definitions on :

- *Body functions* are the physiological functions of body systems (including psychological functions).
- *Body structures* are anatomical parts of the body such as organs, limbs and their components.
- *Activity* is the execution of a task or action by an individual.
- *Participation* is involvement in a life situation.
- *Environmental factors* make up the physical, social and attitudinal environment in which people live and conduct their lives.

### Applications and Uses

ICF is the international standard for health and disability related data and serves as the reference text for the conceptualisation of health. ICF is recommended for use :

- as a statistical tool for collecting and recording data.
- as a research tool for measuring outcomes (e.g. health outcomes, quality of life) or environmental factors.
- as a clinical tool for assessing needs, matching treatments with specific conditions, rehabilitation.
- as a social policy tool in planning social security, compensation systems and policy formulation.
- as an education tool for designing curricula and raising awareness, prevention and health promotion.

#### Contents

*Introduction:* ICF basic concepts

*Main body:* Part 1: Body functions and structures, Activities and Participation  
Part 2: Contextual factors

*Annexes:* Coding Guidelines and further background information

*In view of the differing needs of different types of users, ICF is presented in multiple formats and versions:*

#### ICF Full Version

*A conclusive volume with glossary definitions and the full list of codes including all details. Available in all official WHO languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish).*

#### ICF Pocket Version

*The pocket sized version contains main 2 level codes (max. 99 per list) for practical purposes. Available in English only.*

#### ICF on CD-ROM

*The CD-ROM includes ICF in 6 official WHO and other languages and provides the following functionalities:*

1. Allows browsing the classification in its tree structure
2. Can display two languages at the same time
3. Provides advanced search functions
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7. Allows user to send comments and feedback to WHO

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