

"From disability to activity; from handicap to participation": the new classification orientations of the world health organization.

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The need for communication codes, which make it possible to share and properly transmit information, has required the use of classifications even in the health care system. The common use of classification systems of both physical and mental diseases, has been followed by neither an appropriate knowledge nor a large and systematic use of classifications which refer to consequences and restraints resulting from diseases.

In our work, after a brief presentation of classifications that are mainly used in the health care system, we introduce the WHO's international classification of diseases: International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH) and the most important innovations in terms of language and concepts that are already enclosed in the review draft, the International Classification of Impairments, Activities, and Participation (ICIDH-2).

The ICIDH, as a system of classifying consequences of diseases and impairments, is a reference system which facilitates a more individual and contextual evaluation, through the detection of strengths and weaknesses that a person may experience in different situations as well as the degree of incidence of environmental factors in facilitating or hurdling participation to community life.

We also underline the importance of using such a system of classification for epidemiological, research, clinical, and educational purposes, since it suggests standardized definitions and terminology which are useful for a better transmission of health and socio-educational data.

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