

Weaving a Net of ICF Users

The World Health Organization (WHO) Collaboration Center for the Family of International Classifications in Portuguese (CDCD) organized the first national meeting to discuss issues related to the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), for disability and health. The meeting took place at the Public Health College of São Paulo University on the 18th and 19th of July, 2007. The objective of this meeting was to disseminate the ICF and its applications as well as to allow contacts and experiential exchanges between researchers interested in this classification system. Approximately 200 individuals, including professors, health professionals, graduate students, political representatives and people with impairments from different regions of the country took part in the event. Several activities were developed during the meeting, including a mini-course, lectures about the history of classifications; ICF for children and adolescents; use of the ICF in education, research and clinical practice; and the ICF and quality of life and human rights.

The model of functioning and disability of the WHO is based upon a psychosocial approach and reflects the interaction among several health dimensions (biological, individual and social) described by the following components: body structures and functions, activities and participation. The ICF introduces an innovative paradigm for thinking and working with impairments and disabilities, since they are not directly from the results from health conditions, but they are also determined by the specific physical and social contexts, the different cultural perceptions and attitudes in regards to deficiency, and the availability of services and public policies¹.

During the meeting, several experiences of use of the ICF as a classification system and as a conceptual model of functioning and disability were presented. Applications of the ICF model included the utilization of its conceptual structure to analyze the impact of a health condition on human functioning^{2,3}, analysis of available scientific evidence on a specific topic as well the use of the model to guide clinical reasoning⁴. Additionally, the ICF could be used to guide development of curriculum structures such as that of the Rehabilitation Sciences Graduate Program / UFMG and health policies as those defined by the National Coordination for Persons with Impairments (CORDE) and by the Health Ministry.

The ICF classification system or their codes have been used in the analysis of the functioning or disability content of several standardized assessment instruments⁵. Another application of the ICF that is

related to the assessment process is illustrated by the development of core sets, considered to represent the most relevant aspects of a health condition. Researchers from the University Hospital Clementino Fraga Filho/UFRJ, from the Public Health College/USP and from the Clinical Hospital/USP, presented studies directed to the development of core sets for different health conditions.

The 1st National ICF Meeting represented an important step in the direction of increasing the utilization of the ICF in Brazil since it favored the exchange of experiences among CIF users and gathered researchers from various institutions.

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