



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

World Health Assembly of the WHO Approves 11th Version of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11), Including New Diagnostic Codes for Chronic Pain

IASP Task Force worked closely with World Health Organization to develop new classification system of chronic pain for improved patient care and research

WASHINGTON, DC – June 3, 2019 – The World Health Organization (WHO) has adopted ICD-11, the latest revision of its International Classification of Diseases, including a new classification system for chronic pain. The decision was made at the World Health Assembly on 25 May 2019.

The new classification system for chronic pain was based on extensive research and data collected over the last six years by an International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) Task Force, chaired by IASP Past President and WHO Liaison, Rolf-Detlef Treede, Dr. Med, Heidelberg University, Mannheim, Germany, and co-chair Winfried Rief, Prof. Dr., Philipps-Universität, Marburg, Germany. As a result of this leadership by the IASP, the new pain classification system will transform patient care and pain research worldwide.

“The inclusion of the new classification system for chronic pain in ICD-11 is an important milestone for the pain field. IASP leadership, on behalf of our members, thanks the member states of the WHO for their leadership in improving patient evaluation, treatment, and research,” says IASP President Lars Arendt-Nielsen, Dr. Med., PhD, Aalborg University, Denmark. “I appreciate the leadership of the IASP Task Force for its tireless work on this project generating evidenced-based recommendations in strong collaboration with IASP Special Interest Groups and national chapters globally.”

“The approval of ICD-11 and its new codes for chronic pain is a fantastic achievement. We warmly congratulate the Task Force on this outcome and are incredibly proud of the significant contribution that members of our society have made to this initiative; namely Professors Michael Nicholas, Milton Cohen and Stephan Schug” says Dr Anne Burke, President of the Australian Pain Society.

“The Task Force looks forward to working with our 96 chapters around the world and their governments to implement ICD-11 with the new pain codes as soon as possible,” says Rolf-Detlef Treede, Task Force Chair. As a result of the Task Force’s efforts, the ICD will, for the first time, include diagnostic codes for chronic pain along with codes for the most common and clinically relevant groups of chronic pain conditions.

ICD-11 will also for the first time provide direct links to electronic health records. “This enables effortless behind-the-scenes coding of clinical detail without disrupting the clinical process, and it will lead to better coding quality and lower cost,” says Dr. Robert Jakob of WHO.

ICD-11 will improve patient care by facilitating multimodal pain treatment and by boosting efforts to measure the quality and effectiveness of care and new research on the prevalence and impact of chronic pain.

A detailed description of the new codes was published January 2019 in a [series of review articles in PAIN](#). An [IASP Pain Research Forum feature article](#) describing the history and importance of the Task Force’s work appeared in February of this year. The WHO press release about the adoption of ICD-11 can be found [here](#).

The articles in the *PAIN* series include:

[Chronic pain as a symptom or a disease: the IASP Classification of Chronic Pain for the International Classification of Diseases \(ICD-11\)](#)

Treede et al. *PAIN*. 2019 Jan; 160(1):19-27.

[The IASP classification of chronic pain for ICD-11: chronic primary pain](#)

Nicholas et al. *PAIN*. 2019 Jan; 160(1):28-37.

[The IASP classification of chronic pain for ICD-11: chronic cancer-related pain](#)

Bennett et al. *PAIN*. 2019 Jan; 160(1):38-44.

[The IASP classification of chronic pain for ICD-11: chronic postsurgical or posttraumatic pain](#)

Schug et al. *PAIN*. 2019 Jan; 160(1):45-52.

[The IASP classification of chronic pain for ICD-11: chronic neuropathic pain](#)

Scholz et al. *PAIN*. 2019 Jan; 160(1):53-59.

[The IASP classification of chronic pain for ICD-11: chronic secondary headache or orofacial pain](#)

Benoliel et al. *PAIN*. 2019 Jan; 160(1):60-68.

[The IASP classification of chronic pain for ICD-11: chronic secondary visceral pain](#)

Aziz et al. *PAIN*. 2019 Jan; 160(1):69-76.

[The IASP classification of chronic pain for ICD-11: chronic secondary musculoskeletal pain](#)

Perrot et al. *PAIN*. 2019 Jan; 160(1):77-82.

[The IASP classification of chronic pain for ICD-11: applicability in primary care](#)

Smith et al. **PAIN**. 2019 Jan; 160(1):83-87.

[The IASP classification of chronic pain for ICD-11: functioning properties of chronic pain](#)

Nugraha et al. **PAIN**. 2019 Jan;160(1):88-94.

About the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP)

IASP is the leading scientific organization devoted to the study of pain. Through a professional community of more than 7,000 scientists, clinicians, healthcare providers, and policymakers from over 130 countries, IASP works to support research, education, clinical treatment, and better patient outcomes for all pain conditions with the goal of improving pain relief worldwide. For nearly 50 years, IASP has strived to advance its mission while adhering to its core values of respect, integrity, commitment, service, and communication. For more information, please visit iasp-pain.org.