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**MEETING OF HEADS OF WHO COLLABORATING CENTRES
FOR THE CLASSIFICATION OF DISEASES**

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Title: Classification of technical aids for persons with disabilities: neighbour or member of the family?

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Chair ISO/TC 173 SC 2

Purpose: Information, discussion and decision

Recommendations:

- ♦ To discuss the usefulness of this classification to be accepted as a member of the Family of International Classifications
- ♦ To ask the FDC to come up with a recommendation to WHO concerning acceptance as FIC-member

Abstract:

In 1992 the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) published the first edition of the international standard “Technical aids for disabled persons – Classification” (ISO 9999: 1992). Because of the need for improvement the classification has been revised twice since its first edition. The most recent version is the second revision (third edition) accepted by ISO and CEN in 2002.

The classification includes technical aids used by persons with disabilities, especially produced or generally available. In the set of definitions use is made of ICIDH terminology; in the next version ICF terminology will be included in the definitions and other consequences of the ICF will be envisaged.

Technical aids (including software) are being classified according to their function. The classification consists of three hierarchical levels and the codes consist of three groups of two digits each. The current version includes eleven chapters (first level). Besides the explanatory text and classification itself, a conversion table between 2nd and 3rd editions and an alphabetical index are provided.

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Introduction

This paper deals with a classification developed by the ISO (International Organization for Standardization) which seems to be at least a neighbour of the ICF, but I wonder whether we should recognize him as a member of the Family of International Classifications (FIC) as well. The classification I present to the audience is: Technical aids for persons with disabilities – Classification and terminology, in short the ISO 9999 (1).

Background

In 1992 the ISO published the first edition of the classification. It took ten years of international cooperation to get at that point. The international effort started because there was a need for uniform terminology in the area of technical aids. A classification was felt to be necessary in order to facilitate the search and selection of technical aids and to be used in product information, prescription guidelines, legal documents, information systems, catalogues, administration of stocks and for surveys and the production of statistics. The classification was intended to be used by several parties such as consumers, governmental authorities, professionals, prescribers, social security funds.

Because of the need for improvement the classification has been revised twice since its first publication and as a result we expect the publication of the most recent version by the end of this year 2002 after voting procedures in ISO and CEN.

Content

The classification includes technical aids used by persons with disabilities, especially produced or generally available. Not included are: items used for the installation of technical aids, solutions obtained by combinations of technical aids which are individually included in the classification, medicines, technical aids and instruments used exclusively by health care professionals, non-technical solutions such as personal assistance, guide-dogs or lip-reading, implanted devices, financial support.

ISO 9999 is based on the function of products and includes software as well. The classification consists of three hierarchical levels. Like other classifications, for each level codes, titles, explanatory notes, inclusions, exclusions, cross references are given. At each level certain codes are reserved for national or local applications.

Chapters

The first level consists of eleven chapters:

- aids for personal medical treatment
- aids for training skills
- orthoses and prostheses
- aids for personal care and protection
- aids for personal mobility

- aids for housekeeping
- furnishings and adaptations to homes and other premises
- aids for communication, information and signaling
- aids for handling products and goods
- aids and equipment for environmental improvement, tools and machines
- aids for recreation

Each chapter is further detailed into a two-digit and a three-digit classification.

Use

The classification is available in the formal languages of ISO and CEN being English, German, French. The former version was available in several other languages (such as Nordic, Dutch, Spanish) and we expect at least the same situation for the coming version. The ISO is accepted as national standard and in use in several countries.

In order to facilitate the use of ISO 9999 an alphabetical index is included as well as a conversion table between editions

ICF relationship

The ISO 9999 version which is going to be published soon includes definitions derived from the ICIDH. It is planned to use the ICF definitions in the next version.

Technical aids are part of the environment, so ISO 9999 could be seen as a more specific and more detailed classification in addition to the E-list of ICF.

For the next revision it is foreseen to compare ISO 9999 and ICF much more in depth. We expect consequences for the revision of ISO 9999, such as: difference in meaning of terms, missing elements in ISO and change in sequence and grouping in ISO 9999. This is going to be discussed in a meeting at the beginning of November 2002 in Japan.

Discussion and decision

Items for discussion:

- Is ISO 9999 to be seen as a member of the Family of International Classifications?
- If yes, which next steps are necessary?
- If not, why not and what should be done in order to make ISO 9999 acceptable as a member?

Reference

- (1) Technical aids for persons with disabilities – Classification and terminology, ISO/FDIS 9999, ISO 2002