

# **International Classification for Patient Safety (ICPS)**

## **Purpose/Definition**

The purpose of the International Classification for Patient Safety is to enable categorization of patient safety information using standardized sets of concepts with agreed definitions, preferred terms, and the relationships between them based on an explicit domain ontology. It is designed to facilitate the description, comparison, measurement, monitoring, analysis and interpretation of information to improve patient care, and for epidemiological and health policy planning purposes.

The World Alliance for Patient Safety is committed to ensuring the International Classification for Patient Safety is a genuine convergence of international perceptions of the main issues related to patient safety. The ICPS is intended to define, harmonize and group patient safety concepts into an internationally agreed classification in a way that is conducive to learning and improving patient safety across time and borders. It is further intended that the ICPS be interoperable with existing international classifications.

It should be noted that the International Classification for Patient Safety is not yet a classification. It is a conceptual framework for an international classification which provides a reasonable understanding of the world of patient safety and patient safety concepts to which existing regional and national classifications can relate.

## **Intended Users**

Intended users include but are not limited to:

- Health care professionals, including clinical, laboratory and management authorities;
- Developers/managers of patient safety reporting systems;
- National health care system administrators;
- Ministries of health;
- Researchers;
- Organizational risk managers;
- Civil society organizations responsible for monitoring patient safety; and
- Consumer and patient advocacy groups.

## **Intended Uses**

Intended uses include but are not limited to:

- Comparing patient safety incident data across disciplines and between organizations on the local, national and international levels;
- Trending patient safety incident data;
- Investigating patient safety incidents; determining patient safety issues in different areas of care;
- Examining the roles of system and human factors in patient safety;
- Determining the applications and limitations of existing strategies to reduce risk to patients;
- Identifying potential patient safety issues through evidence based research; and
- Developing priorities and safety solutions.

## **Classification Structure**

Criteria underlying the classification are:

- Identification and definition of key patient safety concepts;
- Organization of patient safety concepts into meaningful and useful categories;
- Linguistically and culturally appropriate;
- Applicability over the full spectrum of health care settings and in developing, transitional and developed countries;
- Comparability of patient safety data information;
- System-based approach; and
- Conformance with the principles governing other members of the World Health Organization Family of International Classifications.

The ICPS has a multi-axial, hierarchical structure with ten high-level classes.

- Incident Type and Patient Outcomes classify information into clinically meaningful, recognizable categories for incident identification and retrieval;
- Contributing Factors/Hazards, Patient Characteristics, Incident Characteristics, and Organizational Outcomes categorize descriptive information; and
- Detection, Mitigating Factors, Ameliorating Actions and Actions Taken to Reduce Risk categorize information related to system resilience relevant to both proactive & reactive risk assessment and management.

## **Administrative Status**

Creation Date: 2006

Last Date Change: January 2009

Current Status: Under development – The World Alliance is working in conjunction with the WHO Health Information Systems Department to develop and maintain the knowledge mechanisms necessary to transform the conceptual framework for the ICPS into a true classification

Next Update Planned: 2010

## **Reference Documents**

World Alliance for Patient Safety  
Taxonomy – More than Words  
ICPS website: <http://www.who.int/patientsafety/taxonomy/en/>

Report on the Results of the Web-Based Modified Delphi Survey of the International Classification for Patient Safety <http://www.who.int/patientsafety/taxonomy/delphi/en/index.html>

The Conceptual Framework for the International Classification for Patient Safety (v1.1) Final Technical Report [http://www.who.int/patientsafety/taxonomy/icps\\_form/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/patientsafety/taxonomy/icps_form/en/index.html)

Available format: PDF

## **Languages**

Report on the Results of the Web-Based Modified Delphi Survey of the International Classification for Patient Safety – Overview

- English
- French
- Spanish

The Conceptual Framework for the International Classification for Patient Safety (v1.1) Final Technical Report

- English

## **Relationship with Other Classifications**

Conformant with the principles governing international classifications, particularly the ICD and the ICF, and compatibility with existing derived and national classifications. The ICPS is conceptual based on the National Reporting and Learning System (United Kingdom), the Advanced Incident Management System (Australia), the Eindhoven/PRISMA-Medical Classification Model (The Netherlands), and the Patient Safety Event Taxonomy (United States).