International classification of functioning, disability and health (ICF) and its application in rehabilitation

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ABSTRACT
The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), approved and recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), established the beginning of a new era for the patient-oriented clinical practice. Conceived as a clinical, research, statistics, social policy and educational tool, the ICF’s main objective is to unify and standardize the language used to describe health and its related status, improving communication and facilitating data comparison among professionals from different fields, at an international level. Based on the bio-psycho-social model from the WHO, the different components emerge as a base for the classification of 1454 categories, allowing a description of a functionality or disability profile for individuals and populations. To be able to apply the ICF to the field of rehabilitation, it is necessary to make a selection of its category groups or generic core sets. This would allow a description of the appropriate level of functioning for specific health conditions. Under the ICF’s model, the multidisciplinary management, based on the rehabilitation cycle (assessment – goal definition – intervention – evaluation), is implemented in a comprehensive manner, facilitating the understanding and description of levels of functionality/ disability, throughout the different stages of the patient’s rehabilitation process.

Key words: ICF-CY, functionality, biopsychosocial model, core sets, rehabilitation cycle.