

SIP Joint Statement on the Importance of Implementing the International Classification of Diseases – 11th Revision (ICD-11)

2025

The SIP Joint Statement presents the common position of the undersigned organisations with regards to the International Classification of Diseases 11th Revision and outlines key recommendations to be taken by both EU and national policymakers to promote its implementation across the European Union.

Key Recommendations

The SIP Joint Statement calls upon EU and national policy makers to:

1. Ensure the full and effective implementation of ICD-11, ICF, and ICHI across all Member States.
2. Accelerate the implementation of the European Health Data Space (EHDS).
3. Ensure that all health systems (including healthcare services, health education, and research environments) use the most up-to-date and valid terminology.
4. Recognise the impact of ICD-11 on patient care and health equity.
5. Engage key stakeholders in the implementation process.
6. Support people living with pain by providing greater transparency and awareness of pain within the healthcare system via ICD-11

Introduction

The Societal Impact of Pain (SIP) Joint Statement presents the common position of undersigned organisations regarding the International Classification of Diseases, 11th Revision (ICD-11). This document outlines why ICD-11 is essential for healthcare systems and provides key recommendations for EU and national policymakers to ensure its timely implementation across the European Union.

A harmonised and interoperable adoption of ICD-11 is essential to ensuring that health systems use the most up-to-date and valid terminology. The transition of ICD-11 also aligns with ongoing digitalisation efforts, particularly in the content of the European Health Data Space (EHDS), which aims to improve healthcare delivery across Member States.¹ Therefore, EHDS promotes the adoption of international standards, such as ICD-11, to enhance data standardisation and interoperability across Member States.

This statement highlights the benefits of ICD-11, and calls for policymakers to prioritise its full and effective integration into national healthcare systems.

What is ICD-11, ICF, and ICHI

The **International Classification of Diseases (ICD)** is the international standard diagnostic tool for epidemiology, health management, research, and clinical purposes, as well as the international standard for reporting diseases and health conditions.² The ICD allows for:

- Recording individual health conditions at the desired level of detail. This is why it is used in many health systems to diagnose conditions and determine which treatment is received.
- Generating healthcare statistics and reimbursement information.
- Sharing and comparing health information between hospitals, regions, settings, and countries.
- Comparing data in the same country across different time periods.

The ICD is updated at regular intervals to reflect the current state of health knowledge. Experts, international societies for the medical areas and professions, patients, and their organisations are brought together by the World Health Organization (WHO) to revise the ICD. On 25 May 2019, the World Health Assembly (WHA) adopted the ICD-11, and this latest revision which came into effect on 1 January 2022.³

ICD-11 is both independent of language and culture, as well as clinically relevant and scientifically updated, bringing greater detail to ICD-10. Terminology and classification have been integrated into one structure. ICD-11 allows the systematic recording, analysis, interpretation and comparison of mortality and morbidity data collected in different countries or regions at different times.⁴ Additionally, it ensures the semantic interoperability and reusability of recorded data for the different use cases, such as decision support, resource allocation, reimbursement, and guidelines among others.²

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) is a classification of health and health-related domains and is the WHO framework for measuring health and disability at both individual and population levels. The ICF is widely used in rehabilitation, policymaking, and research to ensure a more holistic approach to health and disability assessment.⁵

The International Classification of Health Interventions (ICHI) serves as a global standard for categorising medical, surgical, and public health interventions. It ensures consistency in documenting healthcare services across different countries and supports resource planning, quality assessment, and outcome measurement.⁶

ICD-11, if used combined with the ICHI and ICF, widens the use of recording patient data, and provides a comprehensive approach to health classification, covering diagnoses, functioning, and interventions to improve patient care and health system management. Additionally, stem codes for the classification go beyond diagnosis, and allows external reasons or causes to be recorded and recognised. The terminology extension codes, allows for a greater detail of patient symptoms and data recording.⁷

In terms of ICD-11 implementation, Member States should carry out a Health Information System ecosystem analysis and review, to highlight challenges and opportunities when implementing ICD-11 in their countries, as well as to specify and carry out a stepwise transition process.

Why is ICD-11 a Positive Development for Healthcare

ICD-11 represents a major step forward in healthcare classification and provides greater detail, integrating terminology and classification into a single structure, and ensuring consistency across different languages and cultures. One of its key advantages is the ability to systematically record, analyse, and compare mortality and morbidity data across different countries and regions over time. Additionally, ICD-11 enhances semantic interoperability, ensuring that recorded data can be reused effectively for various purposes, including clinical decision-making, resource allocation, reimbursement, and the development of guidelines.²

For successful implementation, Member States should conduct a thorough analysis of their Health Information Systems (HIS) to identify challenges and opportunities, ensuring a smooth transition to ICD-11 through a structured, step-by-step approach. Without accurate recording and reporting of diagnoses, treatment options and social participation may be negatively impacted at an individual level. Additionally, the lack of a systematic classification has historically hindered global epidemiological research, making it difficult for policymakers and healthcare providers to design effective policies, services, and interventions.

With ICD-11, healthcare systems can collect accurate, timely data on diagnoses, treatments, and healthcare costs, leading to improved patient care and better public health outcomes.

Why is ICD-11 Beneficial for Pain Alliance Europe

ICD-11 represents a positive development for healthcare from the patient perspective as well because it improves the accuracy and comprehensiveness of diagnoses, leading to more personalised and effective care. The updated coding system enables better tracking of diseases and conditions, improving the quality of treatment and care coordination across healthcare providers. It also enhances global health data collection, fostering faster response to emerging health trends, and promotes greater standardisation, which can reduce errors and improve patient safety. Ultimately, ICD-11 empowers both healthcare professionals and patients by creating a more efficient and transparent healthcare system that ultimately leads to better health outcomes overall.

Many patients, particularly those living with chronic pain, are not fully aware of how ICD-11 is used and how that directly impacts their care. This lack of awareness underscores the urgent need for education as well as a broader effort to improve health literacy during its implementation. For patients, especially those with complex or invisible conditions, ICD-11 offers significant benefits. By officially recognizing their conditions, it helps validate their experiences, reduce stigma, and alleviate the anxiety and uncertainty that often accompany seeking care or support. With clear, standardised codes, patients can feel more confident that their conditions will be properly acknowledged, leading to more accurate diagnoses and personalised treatment plans. This could also ensure that they will have access to appropriate referrals, specialized care, and treatments that will be covered by health insurance. Ultimately, with ICD-11 implemented, patients will be better equipped to advocate for themselves within the healthcare system, fostering a greater understanding of their needs and ensuring that their care is aligned with their unique health journeys.

“PAE calls on all relevant stakeholders to ensure patients are educated, empowered, and equipped to benefit fully from ICD-11’s implementation”.

Joint Statement Calling for the Timely Implementation of ICD-11

SIP and PAE urge EU and national policymakers to take the following actions to accelerate the adoption of ICD-11:

- 1. Ensure the full and effective implementation of ICD-11, ICF, and ICHI across all Member States.**
The SIP Joint Statement signatories agree that the combined use of these classifications will improve data recording, strengthen health systems, and support digitalisation.
- 2. Accelerate the implementation of the European Health Data Space (EHDS).**
ICD-11 plays a key role in ensuring that health data is standardised and interoperable across EU countries. Thus, the SIP Joint Statement signatories urge the EU to prioritise the timely rollout of the EHDS, which recommends the use of the latest version of the ICD-11, underscoring its critical role in ensuring data standardisation and interoperability.
- 3. Ensure that all health systems (including healthcare services, health education, and research environments) use the most up-to-date and valid terminology.**
Standardising terminology across the EU will improve healthcare quality, patient outcomes, and research capabilities. The SIP Joint Statement signatories call on EU Member States and policymakers to ensure consistency in the adoption of ICD-11.
- 4. Recognise the impact of ICD-11 on patient care and health equity.**
Implementing ICD-11 will improve diagnosis, treatment planning, and patient outcomes. The classification’s inclusion of chronic pain and other complex conditions will help reduce stigma, ensure better access to care, and provide a more accurate picture of disease burden across Europe.
- 5. Engage key stakeholders in the implementation process.**
Policymakers should work closely with healthcare professionals, researchers, patient organisations, and digital health experts to ensure a smooth and effective transition to ICD-11. Collaborative efforts will drive awareness, education, and best practices for implementation.

6. Support patients by providing greater transparency and awareness within the healthcare system via ICD-11.

The SIP Joint Statement signatories urge policymakers to use this as the opportunity to raise awareness on the relevance and need of ICD-11 implementation at national level. Greater visibility will empower patients by acknowledging their lived experiences and ensuring their needs are taken seriously within healthcare systems.

Conclusion

The timely and effective implementation of ICD-11 is essential to modernising healthcare systems, improving patient care, and advancing digital health initiatives across the EU. Ensuring that Member States transition to ICD-11 in a timely and coordinated manner is crucial for achieving a harmonised and efficient health data ecosystem. Implementing the EHDS and its recommendation to use the most current version of the ICD-11 is fundamental to this process. Therefore, SIP calls on policymakers to take urgent action to integrate ICD-11 into national health strategies and prioritise pain care within healthcare systems.

Signatories

- The Societal Impact of Pain (SIP) Platform
- Pain Alliance Europe (PAE)
- European Academy of Neurology (EAN)
- European Psychiatric Association (EPA)

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SIP remains available for further discussions with the European Commission, the Members of the European Parliament, the Council, digital health technology developers, and civil society stakeholders for future cooperation to ensure our recommendations are implemented in the area of digital health.

About SIP

The 'Societal Impact of Pain' (SIP) platform is a multi-stakeholder partnership led by the [European Pain Federation EFIC](#) and [Pain Alliance Europe \(PAE\)](#), which aims to **raise awareness of pain and change pain policies**.

The platform provides opportunities for discussion for health care professionals, pain advocacy groups, politicians, healthcare insurance providers, representatives of health authorities, regulators, and budget holders.

The scientific framework of the SIP platform is under the responsibility of EFIC, and the strategic direction of the project is defined by both partners. The pharmaceutical companies [Grünenthal GmbH](#) and [GSK](#) are the main sponsors of the Societal Impact of Pain (SIP) platform.

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