# Traditional Medicine in ICD-11

## Why in News?

International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) was recently updated to integrate traditional medicine systems of healthcare practices related to Ayurveda, Siddha, and Unani.

## What is International Classification of Diseases (ICD)?

- **International Classification of Diseases (ICD)** – Serves as the *cornerstone of global health data*, providing a standardized language for classifying diseases, injuries, and causes of death.
- **Foundation of Global Health Data** – For over a century, the ICD has been instrumental in *tracking health trends, informing public health policies, and facilitating research*.
- It *enables comparisons of mortality and morbidity data across countries* and time, providing crucial insights into disease burden and healthcare needs.
- **Latest version** – ICD-11.

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| **Core Purpose** | Serves as the universal language for health professionals worldwide. |
| | Standardizes the recording, analysis, and interpretation of mortality and morbidity data. |
| | Enables comparison of health data across countries and time periods. |

## What is Key Features and Advancements in ICD-11?

- **Adopted by** – The *World Health Assembly in 2019* and effective since 2022, represents a significant leap forward.
- It is more comprehensive, digitally adaptable and incorporates contemporary medical knowledge.
- **Enhanced Interoperability** – ICD-11 seamlessly *integrates with other health information systems* and standards like Orphanet and MedDRA, facilitating data

exchange and analysis.
- The 2025 update enhances this with FHIR API integration and advanced Natural Language Processing (NLP), enabling *real-time data exchange and improved accuracy*.

*FHIR stands for **Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources**. It is a standard for exchanging healthcare information electronically.*

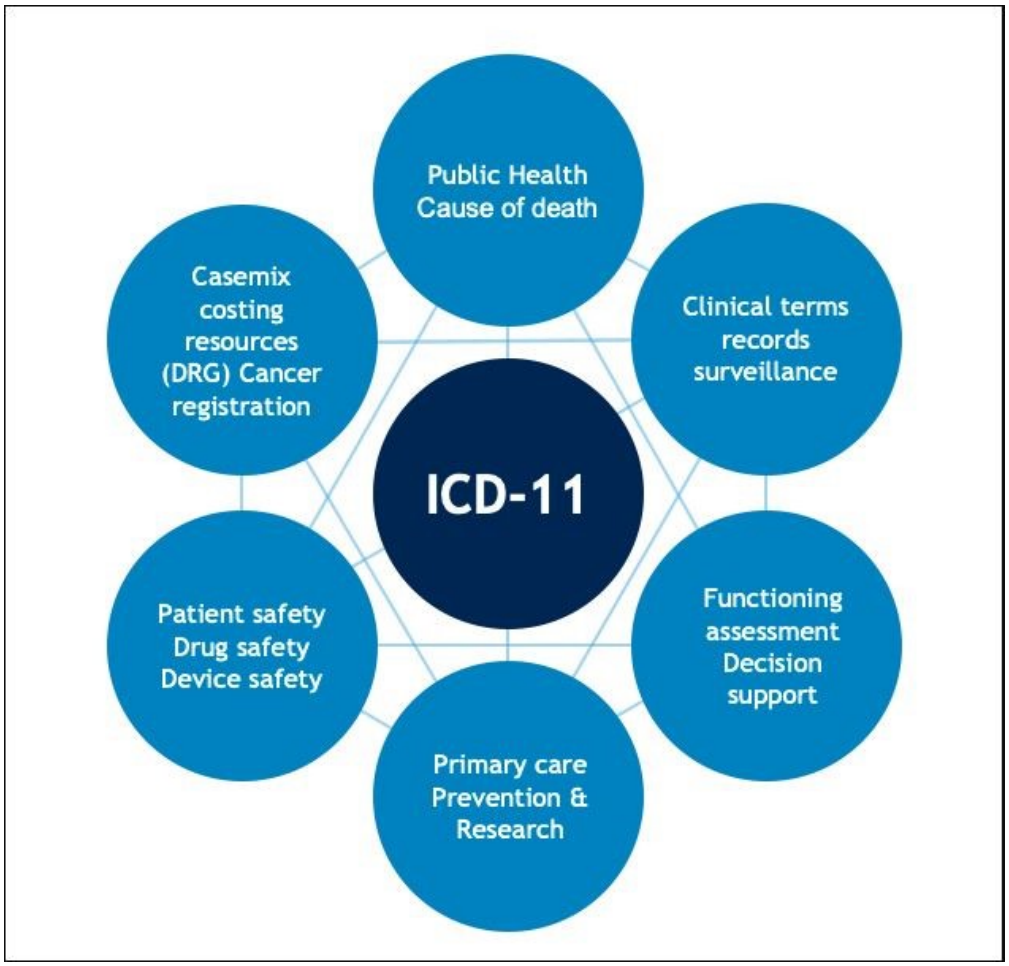
*It's designed to be easier to implement than some older standards, using modern web-based technologies.*

- **Improved Accuracy and Ease of Use** – Features like enhanced spelling correction and language variation recognition minimize errors in data entry.
- This, coupled with a user-friendly design, makes ICD-11 more accessible and efficient for healthcare professionals.
- **Multilingual Expansion** – *Available in 14 languages* with ongoing expansion, ICD-11 promotes global accessibility and inclusivity.
- **Digital Integration** – ICD-11 is *designed for the digital age*, offering online and offline access, APIs, and tools that enhance data collection, analysis, and reporting.
- This digital focus is crucial for *leveraging AI and advanced analytics in healthcare*.
- **Conceptual Framework** – ICD-11's framework is independent of language and culture, ensuring its applicability across diverse populations and healthcare settings.

## What are the significance of integrating Traditional Medicine with ICD 11?

- **Traditional medicine** – One of the most ground-breaking aspects of the ICD-11, particularly highlighted in the 2025 update, is the inclusion of a module for traditional medicine conditions.
- This module specifically addresses ***Ayurveda, Siddha, and Unani***, recognizing their significant role in healthcare, especially in certain regions.
- **Policy Development** – Supports evidence-based policymaking for integrating traditional medicine into national health systems
- Guides insurance coverage decisions for traditional treatments.
- **Global Recognition** – This inclusion marks a pivotal moment for traditional medicine, elevating its status in global health reporting, research and policymaking.
- It facilitates the *systematic tracking of traditional medicine services*, enabling evidence-based policymaking and resource allocation.
- **Quality and Safety** – Standardizes terminology for better quality monitoring.
- Improves safety through systematic documentation.
- **Dual Coding** – The module *allows for dual coding, where both traditional and conventional diagnoses can be recorded*.
- This comprehensive approach provides a more holistic understanding of patient health and facilitates research into the effectiveness of traditional practices.
- **Data Collection and Research** – By providing standardized terminology, the module enhances data collection on the use and outcomes of traditional medicine by:
    - Paving the way for rigorous research and evidence-based integration into healthcare systems.

- **Cultural Sensitivity** – Recognizing and incorporating traditional medicine reflects a growing understanding of the importance of culturally sensitive and holistic healthcare approaches.
- **Economic Impact** – Creates framework for *insurance coverage of traditional treatments*.
- Supports development of traditional medicine industry.
- **Patient Care Enhancement** – Enables comprehensive patient records across different medical systems.
- Supports informed decision-making in treatment choices.




## What are its Implications for Global Health?

- **Improved Data Quality** – Enhanced accuracy and interoperability lead to better data quality, which is *essential for informed decision-making in public health*.
- **Strengthened Health Systems** – By facilitating efficient data management and analysis, ICD-11 contributes to strengthening health systems at national and global levels.
- **Enhanced Research** – The standardized framework enables large-scale research, including comparative studies of different treatment approaches, *both conventional and traditional*.
- **Universal Health Coverage** – The inclusion of traditional medicine supports the WHO's goal of universal health coverage by recognizing the diverse healthcare needs of populations and promoting integrated healthcare approaches.
- **Progress towards SDGs** – ICD-11 contributes to achieving health-related Sustainable

Development Goals by providing the data and tools necessary to monitor progress and address health inequalities.

## What are the Challenges?

- **Implementation** – Effective implementation requires training healthcare professionals, updating health information systems and ensuring data quality.
- **Data Analysis** – Leveraging the vast amount of data generated by ICD-11 requires robust analytical capabilities and infrastructure.
- **Ongoing Updates** – The dynamic nature of medical science necessitates continuous updates and revisions to ICD-11 to reflect new discoveries and evolving understanding of diseases.

## References


1. PIB – ICD-11
2. WHO – ICD-11



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