

CORE CURRICULUM UNDERLYING CAUSE OF DEATH CODERS INCLUDING LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This core international curriculum describes entry-level requirements. Its purpose is to provide a basis for education for all countries.

Availability of resource materials and essential references needed for coding

- Full set of ICD-10 (Tabular List, Instructions, and Index) (current edition as updated by WHO)
- Periodic official WHO updates to ICD-10
- Medical dictionary
- Training materials relevant to core curriculum
- Drug references
- Abbreviation list
- Contact person to ask questions

1. Knowledge of basic medical science

Intent: To develop an understanding of medical terminology that will be encountered in cause of death statements, the structure and function of the human body and the nature of disease

- Medical terminology (A study of common medical terms related to major disease processes.)
- Basic anatomy (A study of the structure of the human body utilizing a system approach.)
- Basic physiology (A study of the functions affecting the human body.)
- Concept of etiology and risk factors
- Basic pathology (A study of the causes and nature and effects of diseases.)

At the conclusion of this module, the coder should be able to:

- spell and define medical terms as well as explain the concepts of root/suffix/prefix word builds
- identify the normal structure and function of all human body systems
- name the typical causes, diagnosis, and treatment of common diseases
- define the concept of etiology and its relationship to risk factors
- state the nature and course of alterations in structure produced by etiological agents and mechanisms of the body

2. Legal/Ethical issues relevant to the country in which coding is being done

Intent: To introduce legal and ethical issues applicable to health information, its collection and release.

- Privacy and confidentiality principles (see appended proposed principles)
 - Use of person-identifiable information
 - Adherence to relevant laws and regulations
 - Access to person-identifiable information

- Release of information
- Professional ethics

At the conclusion of this module, the coder should be able to:

- apply policies and procedures for access and disclosure of personal health information
- utilize current laws and regulations related to health information initiatives
- release patient-specific data to authorized users
- practice and promote ethical standards of practice

3. General uses of underlying cause of death data

Intent: To explain the purposes for which underlying cause of death data are collected and how they are used.

- Context in which coding is done
- Purposes for coding
- Statistical outputs
- Evidence for health policy
- Planning and evaluating health services and programs
- Medical and public health research
- Clinical education

At the conclusion of this module, the coder should be able to:

- list the common reasons underlying cause data are collected
- describe the general uses of underlying cause of death data

4. Specific uses of underlying cause of death data

Intent: To introduce the specific uses of coded mortality data

- Health situation and trend analysis
 - Leading causes of death
 - Definition of policies and priorities
 - Planning health programs and services
 - Health indicators
 - Trend analyses
 - A critical element to identify:
 - Public health problems
 - Groups at risk
 - Needs of medical and sanitary research
- Epidemiological surveillance (all listed causes)
 - First or main source of information for certain diseases
 - At local level, investigation of cases, disease control measures
 - Specific population groups/problems (e.g., maternal and infant mortality, adolescents, elderly)
- Evaluation in health
 - Quality of care
 - Outcomes of specific programs

- Different technologies

At the conclusion of this module, the coder should be able to:

- enumerate specific uses for underlying cause of death data

5. Users of mortality data

Intent: To explain the different groups and stakeholders who are users of mortality data.

- Epidemiologists
- Statisticians
- Program managers
- Actuaries
- Policy makers
- Researchers
- Demographers
- Educators and students
- International organizations (World Health Organization, United Nations)

At the conclusion of this module, the coder should be able to:

- name specific users of underlying cause of death data

6. Sources of Mortality Data

Intent: To explain the roles of the different persons responsible for reporting data on the deceased and the sources of that data.

- Providers of data (e.g., medical officers, coroners, medical examiners, funeral directors, and other informants)
- Source documents (e.g., death certificates, police reports, coroner reports, and other reports)

At the conclusion of this module, the coder should be able to:

- state the various roles of the individuals reporting data on the deceased
- relate the provider of data with the source
- verify completeness, accuracy, and appropriateness of data and data sources

7. The International Classification of Diseases (ICD)

Intent: To develop an understanding of the ICD and to develop the knowledge and skills that are necessary to assign valid codes for causes of death.

- Nomenclature and Classification
- International context
 - WHO Family of International Classifications
 - Reference Classifications (ICD and International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health [ICF])
 - Derived and related classifications
- Standardization and comparability
- History of the classification
- Structure of classification

- Updating mechanisms of classification

At the conclusion of this module, the coder should be able to:

- distinguish a nomenclature from a classification
- describe the WHO Family of International Classifications and their relationships to each other
- discuss the history of the classification
- state the structure of the classification
- explain the classification's update process

8. How to code

Intent: to provide detailed instruction and experience on how to apply the coding rules and assign codes.

- How to use different volumes of the ICD
- Concept of underlying cause of death
 - Definition
 - International format of medical certificate of cause of death
- Rules, instructions and conventions for coding underlying cause of death
- Appropriate exercises in selection and coding

At the conclusion of this module, the coder should be able to:

- apply diagnosis codes using ICD-10
- adhere to current established guidelines in code assignment

9. Quality Assurance

Intent: To raise awareness about the various factors that influence the quality of coded data and describe techniques for assuring the highest quality data possible.

- Quality of source documents
- Querying processes (e.g., sequencing on certificate, what and how to query)
- Editing and validation
- Timeliness, completeness and accuracy
- Responsibility for data quality
- Processes for accessing expert advice

At the conclusion of this module, the coder should be able to:

- conduct analysis to ensure documentation in the record supports the diagnosis
- validate coding accuracy using clinical information found on certificates
- resolve discrepancies between coded data and supporting documentation