

# Appendix A: Classifications

## International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems

The International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD) is used to classify diseases and other health problems (including symptoms and injuries) in clinical and administrative records. The use of a standard classification system enables the storage and retrieval of diagnostic information for clinical and epidemiological purposes that is comparable between different service providers, across countries and over time.

In 1903, Australia adopted the ICD to classify causes of death and it was fully phased in by 1906. Since 1906, the ICD has been revised nine times in response to the recognition of new diseases (for example, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)), increased knowledge of diseases and changing terminology in the description of diseases. Comparability factors are sometimes required between revisions to make comparisons valid if a disease definition changed between the revisions. For breast cancer, a comparability factor of 0.98 applies to convert ICD-9 mortality data to ICD-10 data (ABS 2007), while a comparability factor of '1' applies to convert such data from ICD-8 to ICD-9 standards (ABS 1981).

The latest version, ICD-10, was endorsed by the 43rd World Health Assembly in May 1990 and officially came into use in World Health Organization (WHO) member states from 1994. The Australian modification of ICD-10, which is referred to as the ICD-10-AM (NCCH 2008b), has been used for classifying diagnoses in hospital records in all states and territories since 1999–00 (AIHW 2000).

## Australian Classification of Health Interventions

The current version of the ICD does not incorporate a classification system for coding health interventions (i.e. procedures). In Australia, a health intervention classification system was designed to be implemented at the same time as ICD-10-AM (in July 1998). The system was based on the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) coding system and was originally called MBS-Extended. The name was changed to the Australian Classification of Health Interventions (ACHI) with the release of the third revision of the ICD-10-AM in July 2002 (NCCH 2008c). ACHI and ICD-10-AM are used together for classifying morbidity, surgical procedures and other health interventions in Australian hospital records.

## International Classification of Diseases for Oncology

Cancers were originally classified solely under the ICD classification system, based on topographic site and behaviour. However, during the creation of the ICD-9 revision in the late 1960s, working parties suggested the creation of a separate classification for cancers that included improved morphological information.

The first edition of the International Classification of Diseases for Oncology (ICD-O) was subsequently released in 1976, and in this classification, cancers were coded by both morphology (histology type and behaviour) and topography (site).

Since the first edition, a number of revisions have been made, mainly in the area of lymphomas and leukaemias. The current edition, the third edition, was released in 2000 (Fritz et al. 2000) and is currently used by most state and territory cancer registries and by the AIHW in regard to the Australian Cancer Database.