

# Global Health Information Makes Big Strides

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Welcome to the new year, also known as the year of the rabbit.

Acupuncturists will be pleased to know 2011 is bringing good news from the World Health Organization through the development of diagnostic codes. The codes will be included in the International Classification of Disease (ICD-11) code set.

This is a very exciting prospect and will bring credibility to both acupuncture and Oriental medicine worldwide.

In December, the World Health Organization (WHO) held a meeting in Tokyo where progress on the project was presented.

There were presentations of information submitted by China, Korea and Japan. These countries represent the birthplace of acupuncture and each country has its own traditional medicine classification and terminology.

China used the 1995 classification codes of diseases and *ZHENG* (pattern/syndrome) for traditional medicine, which has disease and pattern names. This is a national standard and is distributed electronically. Patterns and syndromes are groups of presenting signs and symptoms that determine the prescribing formulae.

Japan uses the ICD disease description for western and Kampo medicine and government insurance claims. There are 148 formulae within Kampo medicine. Kampo medicine is traditional medicine developed in Japan during the last 1,500 years from practices with Chinese origin. Korea uses the KCD4 (2004) based on the ICD-10 for western medicine. The KCDOM-2 has disease names used for traditional medicine.

The United States does not have a similar document. The development of diagnostic codes for ICD-11 will be helpful for the AOM profession in the states.

WHO is proposing that all of the above referenced documents and any other possible sources be brought together in a publication for traditional medicine.

The resulting document will be integrated into the WHO family of classifications and terminologies.

There are other classifications on disease, disability and interventions based on standard methods of medicine. This will allow traditional medicine to be able to become part of the global health information system.

This is a giant step.

This project also encompasses the collection of data and information, which will be put into electronic form. This is called ontology and constructing it in electronic form is called "informatics"- the place where medicine and technology meet.

This information will be formatted for use in electronic health records (EHR) along with accounting, insurance billing and reimbursement systems.

What does all of this mean to the United States? Sharing of information in an organized format for easy and convenient use. It will help with the establishment of electronic records, which are required by HIPAA by 2014. The personnel at Stanford University in California are now formatting the beginning of the content model. This is a good year for this project as the deadlines are fast approaching.

We will be asking for input for the project in the Beta stage. Please watch for the time and date.

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