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Report of WONCA Classification Committee to WONCA Executive
Committee, April 1997

Charles Bridges-Webb, Chairman

Executive Summary

In the past twelve months the Committee has been active by correspondence, and a five day meeting of 27 representatives from 20 countries was held in Edinburgh in September 1996.

Copies of all meeting agendas, minutes, and correspondence have been sent to the Chief Executive Officer of WONCA, and the Chairman of the WONCA Research Committee.

The committee has nearly finished the second edition of the International Classification of Primary Care (ICPC) which will go to the publishers, Oxford University Press, in June 1997, and is continuing investigation of issues relating to copyright and licensing of electronic versions. Following publication of the updated glossary of general practice classification and research terms, preparation of a full dictionary of general practice has commenced. A paper on the field trial of a severity of illness scale was published in Family Practice. There are plans to further develop the COOP/WONCA functional status charts. Liaison with WHO in relation to ICPC and ICD-10, and to the ICD-10 Primary Health Care Classification of Mental Disorders and related educational packages has continued.

Edinburgh meeting

The Committee held a five day meeting in Edinburgh from 13-17 September 1996 which was attended by 27 participants from 20 countries. Further development of ICPC-2 was the main business of the meeting. Nine papers were presented including ones on the use of ICPC in Australia, Canada, France, Japan, and Pakistan. Further work to produce a dictionary of general/family practice, and to enhance the COOP/WONCA Functional Status Charts and the newly developed Duke/WONCA Severity of Illness Checklist was planned. A web site is to be established.

ICPC-2

ICPC has become well established in Europe and Australasia, and is used to some extent in many countries. It has particular value as a framework for data analysis even if a different coding system is used for data recording. It is likely to become widely used in general practice computer medical systems as well as for the previous more traditional survey and research purposes.

Preparation of a second edition is nearly complete, and the manuscript will go to the publishers, Oxford University Press, in June 1997. It is not intended that there be any named individual editors, but that it be published as the work of the

WONCA Classification Committee.

The changes in the second edition will be:

1. A minimum of additions or changes to rubrics; minor corrections and changes in the wording of rubrics; and explicit inclusion and exclusion terms for most rubrics.
2. The addition of inclusion criteria for many rubrics, analogous to those which were included in ICHPPC-2-Defined.
3. Conversion tables from ICPC-2 to ICD-10 and vice versa.
4. A much expanded alphabetical index.
5. New and revised introductory chapters dealing with the concept of episode of care, emphasising ICPC's potential for use with computer based medical records, clarifying its relationship with other classifications, and promoting its international potential.
6. Inclusion of chapters about the COOP/WONCA Functional Status Charts, and the new Duke/WONCA Severity of Illness Checklist developed by the committee in cooperation with Duke University.

The addition of inclusion and exclusion terms, and provision of inclusion criteria, is a major advance which most classifications do not have. ICPC will complement rather than compete with very comprehensive and detailed classifications such as the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) and the Read Codes, and conversion tables to enable interactive use have been and are being developed.

There are versions of the first edition of ICPC in 19 languages, and versions of ICPC-2 in other languages are in various stages of consideration. A French ICPC Club, CISP, has been formed and hopes to produce a French version of ICPC-2 at about the same time as the English language publication.

Copyright and licencing of electronic versions of ICPC.

The potential widespread use of ICPC in general practice computer record systems makes this issue of considerable significance. The Classification Committee does not want to impede such use, but believes that there is scope for appropriate schemes of licencing electronic versions which will benefit WONCA financially, and at the same time provide a mechanism for maintaining the integrity and quality of the classification, and for obtaining feedback from users which can be used in updating.

An initial agreement has been made with the Family Medicine Research Unit at the University of Sydney for them to promote and distribute ICPC in their electronic product ICPC-Plus in the Australia-Pacific area.

The Committee has determined a policy on copyright and licensing for electronic versions of ICPC-2 which is recommended to WONCA; this is attached as Appendix 1. This will apply to further electronic versions of ICPC-2. Negotiations are currently proceeding in regard to its use by a British firm Medicode, and for its use in parts of Europe and in South Africa.

A Dictionary of General/Family Practice

Following publication of a thirty page glossary of classification and research terms in the September 1995 issue of Family Practice, Professor Bentzen is leading a group which will expand this to a full Dictionary of General Practice with the cooperation of interested members of WONCA Council, committees, working parties, and individual members. It is hoped that publication can be arranged by the time of the Dublin World Conference in 1998.

Relationships with the World Health Organisation (WHO)

The chairman has discussed ICPC-2 with Mr A L'Hours and Dr HR Hapsara of the Division of Health Situation and Trend Assessment at WHO. Since ICPC is an appropriate classification for primary care, and complementary to rather than in competition with ICD-10, it is hoped that WHO may be able to jointly sponsor ICPC-2 with WONCA, as occurred with ICHPPC-2-Defined in 1983. Further discussions are planned when the final manuscript is available.

The chairman and Professor Henk Lamberts represented WONCA on a working party which developed the ICD-10 Classification of Mental Disorders for Primary Health Care. This was published in 1996 as Diagnostic and Management Guidelines for Mental Disorders in Primary Care: ICD-10 Chapter V Primary Care Version. Publication of a paper about the field trials of this, in which several members of the WONCA Classification Committee participated in 1994, is pending. A draft Mental Disorders Educational Package was also published, and comments are being sought from WONCA.

DUKE/WONCA Severity of Illness Checklist

A severity of illness scale has been developed based on the Duke University Severity of Illness Checklist . Such a scale is important in standardising patient groups for research purposes, and as an outcome measure for clinical practice. Dr George Parkerson from Duke has been leading a working group which used this in a field trial involving 1191 patients of 22 GP/FPs from 9 countries in 1993-94. The results were published in Family Practice in 1996.

The resulting measure, the Duke/WONCA Severity of Illness Checklist (DUSOI/WONCA Checklist), fits very well with the rubrics of ICPC, and a chapter about its use will be included in the second edition of ICPC.

Budget

The Committee's accounts for 1996 are shown in Appendix 2. The WONCA budget of US\$16,776 was supplemented by outside funding of US\$19,141 and

members own travel costs of US\$10,143.

The proposed budget for 1997 is shown in Appendix 3.

Other Activities

The Committee has appointed a working group to work with the Research Committee to continue to refine and further develop the COOP/WONCA functional health status charts.

Other planned activities of the Committee include expansion and further development of the process codes of ICPC, and development of a generic drug classification for ICPC.

A five day meeting of the committee will be held in Ottawa from 12-16 September 1997. This is deliberately not planned to coincide with any regional meeting of WONCA, because previous experience is that a five day intensive working meeting cannot satisfactorily be grafted onto another major meeting.

APPENDIX 1

WONCA Classification Committee Policy on Copyright and Licensing

The copyright of ICPC, both in hard copy and in electronic form, is owned by WONCA. This policy relates to the electronic version and has the following aims.

Aims:

1. To allow the WONCA Classification Committee to promote, distribute, and support ICPC-2, and further develop it as the best classification for primary care.
2. To maintain international comparability of versions of ICPC-2.
3. To obtain feedback and maintain a clearing house of international experiences with ICPC-2.
4. To achieve recognition of WONCA's initiative and expertise in classification.
5. To promote understanding of appropriate links between ICPC-2 and other classification and coding systems, particularly ICD-10.
6. To encourage use of ICPC-2 rather than inhibit it with restrictions.

7. To obtain financial support to enable achievement of these aims and allow the work of the WONCA Classification Committee to continue and expand.

Policy:

1. The electronic version of ICPC-2 should be made available in as many countries as possible.
2. Versions involving additions, translations, or alterations should be made with input from and agreement of the WONCA Classification Committee if they are to be regarded as official WONCA versions.
3. WONCA should licence appropriate organisations to promote and distribute electronic versions of ICPC-2 in countries, regions, and language groups.
4. Licence fees may be charged through these organisations to the end users and collected by the distributors for WONCA. The fees will be set by negotiation and may be waived when there are advantages to WONCA by so doing, such as when use is for research or development.

APPENDIX 2

WONCA Classification Committee Accounts 1996

INCOME	\$US
Carried forward 1995	1360
WONCA budget	15416
Odense meeting Danish funding DK 44100	7350
" " Norwegian " for CBW travel 1899	
Edinburgh meeting Standard Life grant #5000	8700
" " P/G Education fund # 685	1192
	35917

Note: Members also contributed \$10143 of their own funding for travel to meetings.

EXPENSES

Office expenses Sydney	
Administrative/secretarial \$A 6515	
Post	528
Fax	293
Miscellaneous	283

less interest	-226	
Total \$A 7393		5619
Meeting costs Odense DK 44100		7350
Travel costs " meeting		2172
" " " " for CBW		1899
Meeting costs Edinburgh #5685		9892
Travel costs " meeting		6330
Bentzen for dictionary		500
Parkerson for DUSOI		700
		34462
Expense not yet paid:		
Patterson reimbursement re Edinburgh meeting #250	435	
Balance carried forward to 1997		1020

APPENDIX 3

WONCA Classification Committee Budget 1997

INCOME		\$US
Carried forward from 1996		1020
WONCA budget		16950
University of Sydney WONCA fund		6246
		24216

Note: The University of Sydney fund has accumulated from initial research donations to the Department of General Practice used to form a working account for the WONCA committee, plus small amounts added over the past six years.

EXPENSES

Office expenses Sydney		
Administrative/secretarial \$A 6000		
Post	500	
Fax and e-mail	400	
Miscellaneous	250	
less interest	-150	
Total \$A 7000		5250

Meeting costs (Ottawa, September 1997)	9000
Travel subsidies for " meeting	6000
Patterson reimbursement re Edinburgh meeting #250	435
Bentzen for dictionary office costs and travel	1750
ICPC-2: ICD-10 on disc	700
Indexing	2000
	25135
Balance	(919)