

Validation of the Comprehensive ICF Core Set for Head and Neck Cancer (HNC) from the perspective of psychologists

- A World Health Organization collaboration project -

With the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) of the WHO, there is now an universally accepted framework to classify and describe functioning, disability and health in people with any health condition. Here, we will test its applicability in the treatment of head and neck cancer (HNC) patients. The ICF framework is based on the bio-psycho-social model covering functioning and disability with its components Body Structure, Body Functions, Activities and Participation as well as Personal and Environmental Factors. Since its classification with more than 1400 categories can serve as a reference but is not applicable in clinical practice, tools such as ICF Core Sets have to be created.

The first version of the ICF Core Sets for Head and Neck Cancer was adopted by an international consensus conference (ICF Consensus Conference for Head and Neck Cancer, Nottwil, Switzerland, November 2007) of 21 experts from 13 different countries and different health professions. With this Core Set it will be possible to carry out an internationally uniform classification of patients with Head and Neck Cancer.

Before the ICF Core Sets for HNC can be used routinely they have to be validated. It should be checked whether the interventions of the health professions who are involved in the medical care of patients with HNC are reflected by the ICF Core Sets. In the context of this study the Comprehensive ICF Core Set for HNC shall be validated from the perspective of psychologists. To ensure quality only participants with a proven expertise and experience are included. Therefore, an expert should meet the following inclusion criteria in our study:

- Experienced in the treatment of patients with HNC for at least 5 years
- Fluent in English to contribute to the survey

In an international survey the psychologists will be asked about the patients' problems, resources and aspects of environment they treat in patients with Head and Neck Cancer. The survey will be carried out by e-mail (if necessary by fax/mail). It consists of several survey rounds, is carried out according to the so-called Delphi method and will take about 4 months (beginning: January 2008 with the recruitment of potential participants).

The work load for filling out and dispatching the questionnaire will be around 3 hours between February and June 2008.

The project is a cooperative effort between the Dept. of Otorhinolaryngology at Ludwig-Maximilian-University (Director: Prof. Dr. A. Berghaus), in Munich, Germany, the ICF Research Branch located at the Dept. of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Ludwig-Maximilian-University (Director: Prof. Dr. G. Stucki) in Munich, Germany, and partner organisations across the world.

The development of ICF Core Sets for HNC is an inclusive and open process. Anyone interested to actively participate in the Delphi-survey is invited to contact Sven Becker (Sven.Becker@med.uni-muenchen.de).