

A call to arms of specialty societies to review the WHO International Classification of Diseases, Eleventh Revision terms appropriate for the diseases they manage: The example of the Joint Allergy Academies

To the Editor,

The International Classification of Diseases (ICD) is the world's standard system used for classifying and coding medical diagnoses maintained and revised by the World Health Organization (WHO).¹ However, the ICD framework has never prioritized allergic and hypersensitivity conditions' morbidity² and mortality data.³ Most of the countries are currently operating with the 10th revision (ICD-10), but some countries, *e.g.*, the United States, have been using national adaptations of the ICD-10. Although the ICD-10 adaptations have only recently been sent out in some countries, the WHO will advise all the countries to move to the ICD-11 when it is available.

Work on the 11th revision initiated in 2007 and is scheduled to be presented to the World Health Assembly in 2018. The global allergy community understands that the ICD-11 will be an opportunity for consolidating and updating the terminology, definitions, and classification of allergic and hypersensitivity conditions, thereby increasing their representation and visibility in an international classification system and further strengthening the specialty. To have a uniform voice for the allergy specialty, an international collaboration of six allergy academies was organized. The named Joint Allergy Academies (Fig. 1) has unwaveringly supported a strategic action plan and efforts since 2013 to provide a better classification of these disorders in the new ICD-11. All of the

process has had a strong academic basis, and each step has been documented by peer-review publications.²⁻⁵

OUTCOMES AND PERSPECTIVES FOR THE ACTIONS SUPPORTED BY THE JOINT ALLERGY ACADEMIES

The main achievement of this process was the construction of the "Allergic and hypersensitivity conditions" section in the ICD-11 Beta draft,⁵ which has been built with full agreement of the relevant WHO ICD Expert Working Groups. By allowing all the relevant diagnostic terms to be included in the ICD-11, WHO has recognized its importance to clinicians, health care planners, and other stakeholders. Importantly, the new classification will enable the collection of more accurate epidemiologic data to support quality management of patients, better health care planning, and public health measures to reduce morbidity and mortality. However, much work is still required to achieve quality assurance of the new section.

All the past and current actions supported by the Joint Allergy Academies are the best examples of how collaboration among academies can be combined for a common purpose. Unifying the allergic and hypersensitivity conditions into a single section of the ICD, endorsed by the WHO ICD governance bodies, can be

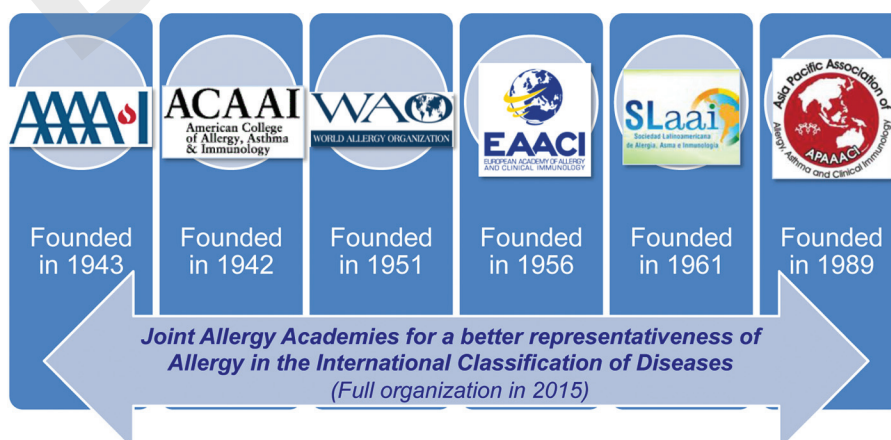


Figure 1. The Joint Allergy Academies for a better representativeness in the International Classification of Diseases.

considered a strong epidemiologic, economical, and political move that advocates in favor of the best management of patients with allergy worldwide. In the current document, we flagged the strong collaboration between academies as a call to arms of specialty societies to review appropriately the ICD-11 terms for the diseases they manage so to better classify patients with allergic and hypersensitivity disorders and provide additional opportunities for population studies.

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