

Cases of illness and death caused by the new pandemic (H1N1) 2009 (influenza A(H1N1), swine flu) have to be identifiable. As such, after discussion with the ICD Update and Reference Committee, the best solution was to use the code J09.

Arguments were:

- Adding a new code to ICD-10 would require updating all existing coding systems and databases. The effort to dissemination and implementation would be considerable. The work would take time.
- Past limited use of new codes for Avian Flu (J09) and SARS(U04.9) is an additional reason for not creating a new category.
- Currently, no cases of avian influenza are reported (causes of death and WHO GIS system).

In the context of the decision, it was acknowledged:

The present definition of the category J09 and its title is misleading. Adding wording that allows inclusion of any influenza listed under J09 seemed the best option. "certain" and "other" is the wording used in ICD-10 where a group of diseases is split between two categories. Clarification of the meaning of certain would be achieved by inclusions.

In summary:

1. Influenza A(H1N1) [swine flu] is categorized to J09
2. The new title of J09 is "Influenza due to certain identified influenza virus"
3. The definitory note on avian influenza will be removed and replaced by a more appropriate one.
4. Future inclusions will mention the particular influenza virus strains that are included in this category.
5. Countries have to identify the cases with identified Influenza A(H1/N1) with respect to IHR and the pandemic status. It is recommended to rather use J09 than having national individual approaches, for countries that have not yet adopted the relevant updates of ICD. Failing to do so, reporting of causes of death to WHO requires recoding the relevant cases to J09
6. Any additional changes, as possible 4 character categories, as well as a possible complete redesign of all influenza categories would be posted on the URC platform, will be discussed there and be finalized at the upcoming meeting of the URC in Seoul.

Best regards

Robert

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Dr Robert JAKOB
Medical Officer (ICD)
Classifications, Terminologies, and Standards
WHO/IER/HSI/CTS
World Health Organization
20, Av Appia
1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland