

Universalism and International Classification of Functioning, Disabilities and Health

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Abstract

Few would deny that disability and how to improve the well-beings of people living with disabilities are important public health issues. However, less attention has paid to the discussion on what it really means by disability and how the concept evolves. In any disciplines, measurement process begins with an understanding of the key concepts and their theoretical definitions. This article presents a brief introduction to the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps and International Classification of Functioning, Disabilities and Health (ICF), two crucial documents published by the World Health Organization and endorsed by the World Health Assembly. From the revisions made between these two documents, we can tell how the concept of disability has evolved. Moreover, official reports on disability policies from the United States and Japan are also introduced in this article in order to show how the two WHO documents have influenced US and Japan's policy orientation towards disability.

Key words: Disabilities and Health, International Classification of Functioning, persons living with disabilities, World Health Organization