

Better Defined WHO International Classification of Disease Codes for Relapsing Fever Borreliosis, and Lyme Disease Education Aiding Diagnosis, Treatment Improving Human Right to Health

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Abstract : World Health Organisation International Classification of Disease codes were created to define disease including infections in order to guide and educate diagnosticians. Most infectious diseases such as syphilis are clearly defined by their ICD 10 codes and aid/help to educate the clinicians in syphilis diagnosis and treatment globally. However, current ICD 10 codes for relapsing fever Borreliosis and Lyme disease are less clearly defined and can impede appropriate diagnosis especially if the clinician is not familiar with the symptoms of these infectious diseases. This is despite substantial number of scientific articles published in peer-reviewed journals about relapsing fever and Lyme disease. In the USA there are estimated 380,000 people annually contracting Lyme disease, more cases than breast cancer and 6x HIV/AIDS cases. This represents estimated 0.09% of the USA population. If extrapolated to the global population (7billion), 0.09% equates to 63 million people contracting relapsing fever or Lyme disease. In many regions, the rate of contracting some form of infection from tick bite may be even higher. Without accurate and appropriate diagnostic codes, physicians are impeded in their ability to properly care for their patients, leaving those patients invisible and marginalized within the medical system and to those guiding public policy. This results in great personal hardship, pain, disability, and expense. This unnecessarily burdens health care systems, governments, families, and society as a whole. With accurate diagnostic codes in place, robust data can guide medical and public health research, health policy, track mortality and save health care dollars. Better defined ICD codes are the way forward in educating the diagnosticians about relapsing fever and Lyme diseases.

Keywords : WHO ICD codes, relapsing fever, Lyme diseases, World Health Organisation

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