

The World Health Organization (WHO) has announced the official publication of a new version of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) which includes a new chapter on *Conditions Related to Sexual Health*, bringing together conditions that were previously categorized in other ways and mostly under mental disorders.

ICD-11 marks the culmination of a ten-year process which benefited from many contributions by and comments from professional societies and patient advocacy organizations, including The International Society for the Study of Women's Sexual Health ([ISSWSH](#)).

Changes in the ICD-11 embody a more integrated approach to sexual health. This reorganization reflects the WHO's definition of sexual health as "*a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity*" ([WHO, 2006](#)).

The new chapter on *Conditions Related to Sexual Health* includes sexual dysfunctions, sexual pain disorders, paraphilic disorders, gender incongruence, adrenogenital disorders, sexually transmitted infections, changes in female and male genital anatomy, sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse, and contraceptive management. Most importantly, the proposed new classification bridges the mind/body divide, which has long been a prominent feature of medical care related to sexual dysfunction. It eliminates the outdated mind/body split and removes many disorders from the mental and behavioral disorders sections, allowing practitioners to address these issues more holistically and in a less stigmatizing and myopic way.

The new classification eliminates previous guidelines that impose a normative standard for sexuality and removes categorizations that selectively target people with same-sex orientation or gender nonconformity, with no clear public health justification. The new classification also removes transsexualism and gender identity disorder from mental and behavioral disorders and moves them to the *Conditions Related to Sexual Health* chapter, thus destigmatizing individuals with gender incongruence and providing a foundation for better access to both biomedical and psychological treatments.



ISSWSH supported this advance by convening a collaborative meeting of top experts from ISSWSH, World Association for Sexual Health (WAS), Sexual Medicine Society of North America (SMSNA), International Society of Sexual Medicine (ISSM), and the leaders of the WHO working group responsible for this new chapter. This multi-organization working group drafted a series of timely recommendations that informed the WHO regarding the Sexual Dysfunction codes in ICD-11.

As a multidisciplinary, academic, and scientific organization, ISSWSH provides opportunities for communication among scholars, researchers, and practitioners about women's sexual function and sexual experience and supports the highest standards of ethics and professionalism in research, education, and the clinical practice of women's sexuality.

ISSWSH is pleased that ICD-11 will include a chapter on *Conditions Related to Sexual Health* and optimistic about the implications this advance will have for improved access to biomedical and psychological treatments. By using a sexual health approach, the creation and organization of this chapter will improve the way that clinicians identify, record, and report diagnoses and create an integrated approach for the delivery of sexual health care worldwide.