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## Digital coding of oral health and care

*Codage numérique de l'état de santé et des interventions bucco-dentaires  
(COSI)*



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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards, but in exceptional circumstances a technical committee may propose the publication of a Technical Report of one of the following types:

- type 1, when the required support cannot be obtained for the publication of an International Standard, despite repeated efforts;
- type 2, when the subject is still under technical development or where for any other reason there is the future but not immediate possibility of an agreement on an International Standard;
- type 3, when a technical committee has collected data of a different kind from that which is normally published as an International Standard ("state of the art", for example).

Technical Reports of types 1 and 2 are subject to review within three years of publication, to decide whether they can be transformed into International Standards. Technical Reports of type 3 do not necessarily have to be reviewed until the data they provide are considered to be no longer valid or useful.

ISO/TR 13668, which is a Technical Report of type 1, was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 106, *Dentistry*, Subcommittee SC 3, *Terminology*.

It is a majority opinion amongst the ISO/TC 106/SC 3 member countries and experts in SC 3/WG 1 that this document should be considered as a guide for the establishment of a system of communication between the various dental codes existing in the world or as an example for the setting up of such codes where they do not exist.

In view of the developments that will certainly take place in the future, it would not be appropriate that this document be presently considered as an International Standard. It is therefore proposed under the form of a Technical Report for provisional application so that information and experience of its use in practice may be gathered. Comments on the content of this document should be sent to the ISO Central Secretariat.

Annex A forms an integral part of this Technical Report. Annexes B and C are for information only.

## Introduction

This Technical Report is based upon the Oral Status and Intervention Index (OSI) adopted in 1983 via the WHO and FDI (see below) as a convenient classification index for oral health and treatment procedures<sup>1)</sup>. This index classifies oral status and care on a scale from 0 to 9; the “0” representing the goal of health or “absence of need for care”; the higher numbers on the scale representing progressively:

- a) worse oral health status; and
- b) increasingly complicated, invasive and costly care interventions.

The upper limits, that is beyond “9”, refer to status for which interventions required are normally referred to specialist care, often of a multidisciplinary nature.

The index was developed by considering different states of oral disease and the skills and resources required to provide the care needed, including the cost, the complexity, the risk of failure and error in treatment and the associated pain and discomfort. It attempts to combine all these factors within one continuum with the aim of improving communication between health policy makers, the community, dental educators and the dental profession. The index thus provides the basis and orientation for an information system for managing, monitoring and reporting oral health and care services.

The World Health Organization (WHO) supports the development and use of numerical terminology and codes based on this concept for the use in oral care systems, as the index provides a health-oriented approach that enables the dental profession to relate care activities to the goal of health.

A further reason for supporting this concept is the potential to facilitate the development of new curricula and exchanges of teaching information and material. This is of special benefit to developing countries, as often teaching at university level is only provided in a foreign language.

The World Dental Federation (FDI) Standing Committee on Relations between the Trade, Industry and the Dental Profession approved the use of the OSI to classify instruments and materials needed for different tasks. It was agreed to promote the organization of trade and information materials in accordance with the index.

In the joint WHO and FDI efforts to promote and assist countries in developing appropriate oral care services for the whole of their populations, the facilitation of communication within all areas of the profession can only be a positive influence.

The coding for oral care procedures presented in this proposal should be seen as part of the development of a standardized management and monitoring system for oral care that should be suitable, with adaptation, for use in almost any oral care system. It is envisaged that the system will encompass the following areas:

- a) recording of oral health status of patients;
- b) codes for oral care procedures;
- c) a reporting system providing information on oral health and care.

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1) WHO TRS 713 (1984) Prevention Methods and Programmes for Oral Diseases.  
WHO TRS 750 (1987) Alternative Systems of Oral Care Delivery.  
FDI INCOGUDET Resolution (Rio de Janeiro 1981).

Software to link the three components is now being developed that will be suitable for oral care for:

- countries with newly developing services and very few resources;
- countries at a moderate level of development; and
- highly industrialized countries.

Where there are extensive management systems already in place, such a system could provide linkages for international communication through computer-mediated translation.