

13/02/2020

Dear PHISC members,

**URGENT COMMUNICATION REGARDING THE CLINICAL CODING OF  
NOVEL CORONAVIRUS: COVID-19**

PHISC believes that the distribution of this communication as soon as possible is vital. It will however also be discussed further at the next PHISC meetings scheduled for Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

Based on information received from the Medical Research Council (MRC), designated as the WHO-FIC Collaborating Center for the Africa Region, and reported media releases from the World Health Organisation (WHO), please take note of the following:

- The coronavirus outbreak has been declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) (1)
- Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director-general of the WHO, announced on Tuesday the 11<sup>th</sup> of February 2020 at a news conference in Geneva that the new coronavirus has been named **COVID-19**: the **CO** stands for corona, the **VI** for virus and the **D** for disease (2)
- WHO officials wanted a name that does not refer to a geographical location, animals, an individual or a group of people (2)
- **An emergency ICD-10 code of U07.1** is assigned to this disease diagnosis (3)
- The previous temporary/interim name was *2019-nCoV acute respiratory disease* (4)

For more information, please see the WHO website, and others below:

1. [https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/30-01-2020-statement-on-the-second-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-\(2005\)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-outbreak-of-novel-coronavirus-\(2019-ncov\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/30-01-2020-statement-on-the-second-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-(2005)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-outbreak-of-novel-coronavirus-(2019-ncov))
2. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/02/11/world-health-organization-names-the-new-coronavirus-covid-19.html>
3. <http://www.whofic.org.za/news.html>
4. [https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200130-sitrep-10-ncov.pdf?sfvrsn=d0b2e480\\_2](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200130-sitrep-10-ncov.pdf?sfvrsn=d0b2e480_2)
5. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
6. <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

- Date these sites were last accessed: 12/02/2020

As per the SA ICD-10 Master Industry Table (MIT), code U07.1 is available and valid for use in South Africa:

ICD10_Code	WHO_Full_Desc	Valid_ICD10_Clinical Use	Valid_ICD10_Primary
U07.1	Emergency use of U07.1	Y	Y

The description of U07.1 will currently remain as “Emergency use of U07.1” on the MIT but this code should be used to report any confirmed **COVID-19**.

Based on the fact that U07.1 is valid in the PDX on our MIT, and because the new description indicates “Coronavirus **Disease-19**” thus a defined disease/condition in its own right, the following is proposed as an *interim* PHISC standard for COVID-19:

Example 1:

Patient admitted with a fever, coughing and shortness of breath. Pathology confirms the cause is Coronavirus disease

\*PDX: U07.1 Emergency use of U07.1

Example 2:

Patient admitted with severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) caused by the Coronavirus: COVID-19

\*PDX: U07.1 Emergency use of U07.1

SDX: U04.9 Severe acute respiratory syndrome, unspecified

Example 3:

A patient diagnosed with confirmed COVID-19 is presenting with acute respiratory failure.

\*PDX: J96.09 Acute respiratory failure, Type unspecified

SDX: U07.1 Emergency use of U07.1

*\*Please reference GSN0001 from the South African ICD-10 Morbidity Coding Standards and Guidelines document when selecting the primary diagnosis.*

Please reference DSN2135\* (Special Screening Examination) for suspected cases.

Sign/symptom codes together with Z11.5 (Special screening examination for other viral diseases) should be used until pathology has definitively confirmed the cause.

Example 4:

Patient admitted with shortness of breath and a fever. Coronavirus disease is suspected, bloods have been sent to the laboratory for testing.

PDX: R06.0 Dyspnoea

SDX: R50.9 Fever, unspecified

SDX: Z11.5 Special screening examination for other viral diseases

As per the South African ICD-10 Morbidity Coding Standards and Guidelines document (April 2014), “A three month period will be allowed for the implementation of any operational changes and a six month period for any system related changes from the date of publication.” **However because COVID-19 has been deemed a public health emergency, U07.1 should be used with immediate effect by PHISC members.**

**\*PHISC Addendum to the SA ICD-10 CS document Version 3 (August 2018)**  
<https://www.phisc.net/downloads/phisc-approved-standards>

Kind regards

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