International classification for patient safety

World Health Organization

Thomas Perneger
Genève

1. Global patient safety challenge
2. Patients for patient safety
3. Reporting and learning
4. Taxonomy for patient safety will develop an internationally acceptable system for classifying patient safety information to promote more effective international learning
5. Research for patient safety
6. Safety solutions
7. Safety in action
8. Technology for patient safety
9. Care for acutely ill patients
10. Patient safety knowledge at your fingertips
Taxonomy drafting group

- Martin Fletcher, NPSA/WHO
- Robert Jakob, WHO
- Richard Koss, JCAHO
- Pierre Lewalle, WHO
- Jerod Loeb, JCAHO
- Thomas Perneger, U Geneva
- William Runciman, U Adelaide
- Heather Sherman, JCAHO
- Richard Thomson, U Newcastle
- Tjerk van des Schaaf, Eindhoven U
- Martti Virtanen, Nordic Centre
- Gerry Castro, JCAHO
- Peter Hibbert, Australian PSF
- Martin Hatlie, Partnership for patient safety
BMC Health Services Research

Research article
The Swiss cheese model of safety incidents: are there holes in the metaphor?
Thomas V Perreger* 1,2

Ce qui se conçoit bien s'énonce clairement
Et les mots pour le dire arrivent aisément.
Boileau, L'art poétique, Chant I.

Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, davon muß man schweigen.
Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus logico-philosophicus
**A classification is…**

- an arrangement of concepts into classes and their subdivisions to express the semantic relationships between them
- i.e., a model of how the world works

**it is not**

- a lexicon / dictionary

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**Intended use of ICPS**

- Measurement of patient safety levels
- Comparisons over time
- Comparisons between countries/health systems
- Incident reporting
- Research on safety
**Principles**

- Theoretical coherence
- Use of natural language / categories
- Comprehensiveness
- World-wide usability
- Compatibility with other WHO classifications

**Timeline**

- 2004-05: development of conceptual framework and classification
- 2006: web based Delphi survey (>200 experts worldwide):
  - Acceptability
  - Applicability
  - Relevance
- 2007-08: field testing of classification
Review

- Patient safety event taxonomy, JCAHO, USA
- National reporting and learning system, UK
- Advanced information management system, Australia
- Eindhoven/PRISMA medical classification model
**Challenges**

- Diffusion
- Complexity
- Usability
- «Western» bias
- Adaptability over time
### ‘El idioma analítico de John Wilkins’ Jorge Luis Borges, 1942

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animals are classified into the following categories</th>
<th>Patient safety events are classified into the following categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Belonging to the emperor</td>
<td>(a) Published in a major medical journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Embalmed</td>
<td>(b) Described in coroner reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Tame</td>
<td>(c) Preventable (according to at least one of the three randomly selected experts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Sucking pigs</td>
<td>(d) Nosocomial infection due to poor hand hygiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Sirens</td>
<td>(e) Avoided through hot-minute recovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Fabulous</td>
<td>(f) Successfully hidden from boss, colleagues, patient, family, and media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) Stray dogs</td>
<td>(g) Patient’s escape from a dementia ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(h) Included in the present classification</td>
<td>(h) Submitted to an online incident reporting system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Frenzied</td>
<td>(i) Wrong dose of catecholamines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(j) Insusceptable</td>
<td>(j) Unnoticed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(k) Driven with a very fine camelhair brush</td>
<td>(k) Subjected to state-of-the-art root-cause analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(l) Et cetera</td>
<td>(l) Mishap, misadventure, accident, mistake, incident, undesirable occurrence, active error, lapse, slip, omitted event, adverse event, violation, illegal action, legal action, complaint, and complication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m) Having just broken the water pitcher</td>
<td>(m) On the front page of today’s newspapers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n) That from a long way off look like flies</td>
<td>(n) On the front page of last year’s newspapers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>