

The ILO International Classification of Radiographs of Pneumoconioses

The ILO International Classification of Radiographs of Pneumoconioses is a powerful tool used throughout the world to improve workers' health surveillance, conduct epidemiological research and make comparisons of statistical data. Some countries have established legal requirements for use of the Classification in the assessment of compensation claims, although the Classification was not originally designed for this purpose. The value of the Classification depends critically on the consistency with which users apply the Guidelines published by the ILO and the standard radiographs that accompany those Guidelines.

The latest (revised 2000) edition of the Classification is now available from ILO. This retains continuity with key features of earlier versions but modifies some of the rules described in the 1980 edition for classifying pleural abnormalities. The text of the new (revised 2000) Guidelines booklet is more concise than the earlier (1980) edition and it clarifies some ambiguities in previous descriptions of the scheme. The revised (2000) edition is based on a comprehensive review, by numerous specialists from many countries, of experience in using the 1980 edition.

A distinctive feature of the revised edition is that it is accompanied by improved (digitized) copies, using state-of-the art computer techniques, of most (20) of the 22 standard radiographs that were distributed with the previous (1980) edition of the Classification. Two new standard radiographs (for pleural abnormalities and for u/u size small opacities) complete the ILO (2000) "Complete Set". The Guidelines booklet includes descriptions of each of the newly produced copies of the standard radiographs. These descriptions differ in some respects from those recorded in the earlier (1980) edition. In particular, there are several revisions of the assessments of the technical quality of films in the new Complete Set, reflecting, in part, more demanding expectations for better quality of the standard radiographs in the new (2000) edition.

A further novel feature of the revised Classification is an option to acquire a reduced number (14) of standard radiographs (the so-called "Quad Set"). The Quad Set incorporates all the abnormalities that are illustrated in the "Complete Set" (22 radiographs) by reproducing critical sections from some of the latter as quadrant images on full-size films. Users who have to classify large numbers of radiographs routinely may prefer to rely primarily on the Quad Set.

The new edition of the **International Classification of Radiographs of Pneumoconioses (revised 2000)** represents a further major effort by the ILO to improve the scheme so that it will continue to provide the universally best-recognized way to record systematically abnormalities seen on chest radiographs.

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