



Who speaks ICF? Implementation of ICF in early childhood intervention centers in Germany

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Abstract Within the last year, the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) has become well known in early childhood interventions centers (EICs) in Germany. To date, its usage has not yet been systematically reviewed. Here, we present the results of a survey (Summer 2017) sent to all early childhood intervention centers in Germany (N= 1000).

Introduction

Since Germany passed a new participation law (Bundesteilhabegesetz - BTHG), in which use of the ICF was declared mandatory for rehabilitation and social institutes in Germany starting in 2018, ICF has become well known. However, only few ICF based methods and instruments exist yet. The ICF Research Institute at MSH Medical School Hamburg started the project "ICF Mapping" in 2016. The primary objective is to explore the status of ICF use for all EICs (N= 1000) in Germany and learning/training needs of professionals.

Methods & Materials

The online survey took place in July 2017. A questionnaire with seven closed questions was developed. We sent a link of the online survey to all leaders of early childhood intervention centers (EIC's) in Germany (N=1000). Data collection was conducted in summer 2017. 329 questionnaires were returned, rendering a response rate of 32,9 %. These questions were asked:

1. The zip code
2. The amount of employees
3. What kind of EIC (3 possibilities)
4. The way they use the ICF
5. The extent of using the ICF per child/year
6. The number of employees using the ICF
7. The number of ICF training or instruction classes taken

Results

Within our sample (n=329), 154 EICs are using the ICF in different ways (46,8 %):

- 111 EICs use ICF as a framework/attitude (72,1%)
- 44 EICs use the ICF-checklists (28,6%) and
- 69 EICs use codes or the ICF Items for intervention plans (44,8%)

(multiple answers possible)

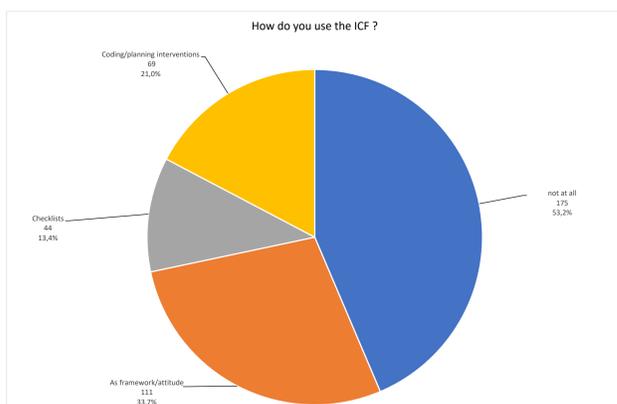
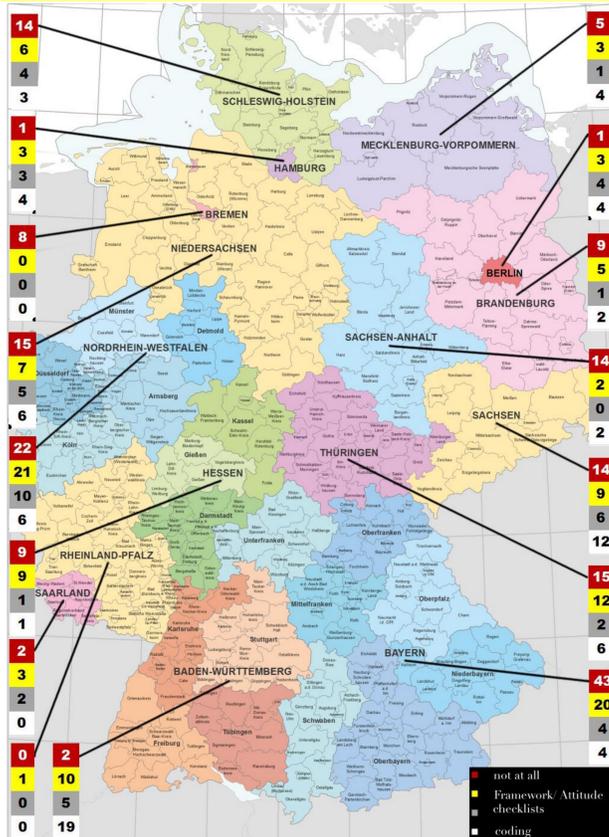


Chart 1: How do you use ICF? Answers of 329 EICs in Germany (multiple answers possible)

Results

Germany consists of 16 federal states. The EICs within these federal states are in various stages of an ICF implementation. The 329 returned answers can be allocated to federal states, showing regional differences in usage (see chart 2).



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Chart 2: use of ICF in the 16 provinces of Germany (multiple answers possible)

Within the sample (n=329), 175 EICs do not use the ICF in any way yet. The majority has not participated in ICF training or introduction classes yet, either (60,6 %).

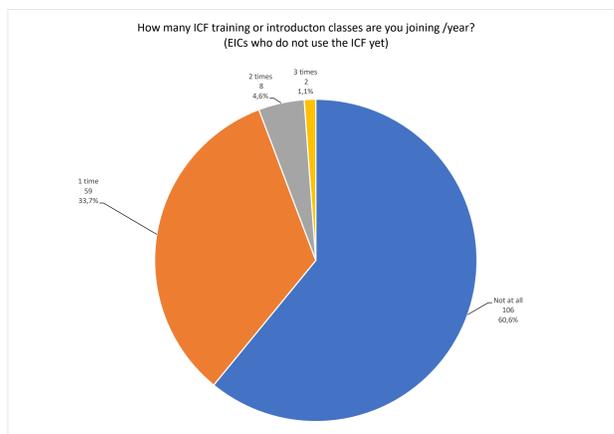


Chart 3: 104 of 175 EICs not using the ICF have also not yet participated in introduction classes.

Results

Within the sample (n=329) 154 EICs use the ICF in some way. Most of them participate in ICF training or introduction classes at least once a year (79,7 %).

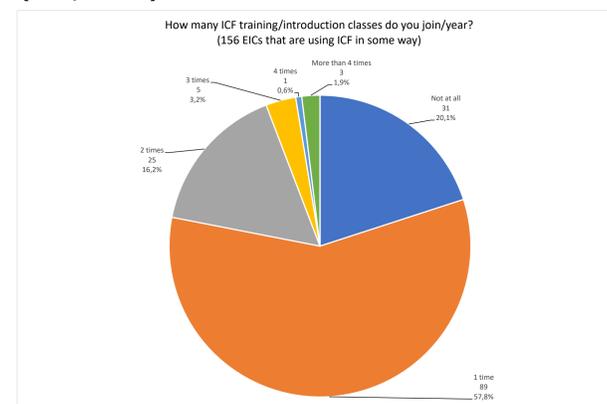


Chart 3: 79,9 % of 156 EICs that use the ICF participate in introduction classes as well.

Conclusions

The German participation law explicitly requires the use of the ICF in the determination of restrictions of participation from next year onwards. It is planned to completely restructure the social system over the next five years. Nevertheless, the ICF is not widely used in EICs yet. The majority of those who do make use of it only apply it as a framework and underlying attitude, while using the ICF for coding does not seem to be a common practice yet. We conclude that there is a compelling need for special ICF based tools or instruments adapted to the daily routine in EICs. Within the next years, all EICs are required to implement the ICF. Together with the previous results within the project „ICF Mapping“ (Simon et al., 2017) these findings indicate that the use of ICF as a common language needs to become more attractive to EICs in Germany. In addition, we observe a strong need for training and introduction classes. The next important goal of ICF Mapping is the development of recommendations for specific programs that facilitate the implementation of the ICF.

Acknowledgements or Notes

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Simon, L., Kottysch, S., Irmeler, M., Kindervater, A. (2017): Do you speak ICF? Poster 2nd international symposium on ICF education, Cape Town, South Africa.

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