



Keynote: The Functioning Revolution

Jerome Bickenbach
University of Lucerne

**Health is important to us, both as individuals
but also socially: health is a public good.**

Why, exactly, is health important to us?

We are told health is best captured by the indicators of mortality
and morbidity:

How long we live

The diseases, injuries, pathologies we experience.

Health is about that, sure, but....

There is something missing – fundamentally – from the picture of health expressed entirely by mortality and morbidity.

- 1. The actual, daily experience of living with a health condition**
- 2. What matters to us about our state of health**

3. The value of health – the link between health and well-being

E.g. SDG3 Good Health and Well-being “To ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”

Living a long time is not necessarily living well: living longer can mean living in worse health

While the absence of disease and injury may be necessary, it is not sufficient for human flourishing or societal welfare.

A key driver of individual well-being is being able to do and become what we wish—achieving our aspirations, goals, and values and in general acting in ways that make our lives worth living.

ICF

International
Classification of
Functioning,
Disability
and
Health



World Health Organization
Geneva

World Health Organization's 2001 international standard classification to augment its *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems* (ICD).

To standardize the collection of comparative international health information.

- ✓ **Body Functions and Structures**
- ✓ **Activities and Participation**
- ✓ **Environmental Factors**

FUNCTIONING

Information about how a person's health state affects their daily life ... information that describes the actual lived experience of health.

What sort of information is that?

Information about the state of the body, expressed by functions and structures of basic biological component – Biophysiological.

Information about how the state of the body affects all of the activities that a person actually engages in her/her actual environment – Performance.

What sort of information is that?

INTRINSIC CAPACITY

‘Biological Health’

PERFORMANCE

‘Lived Health’

“... functioning comprises the domains of both biological health and lived health, where lived health is fully contextualized as an outcome of interactions between a person’s intrinsic health capacity and features of their environment.”

....pain, anxiety, fatigue and weakness, tight joints, skin sores, and other sensory, mobility, and cognitive impairments.

...we cannot climb stairs painlessly, walk as far as we used to, clean or dress ourselves, read a book, make and keep friends, do all the homework we need to do, or perform our jobs, these concrete, real-life difficulties are the lived experience of health.

FUNCTIONING describes what really matters to us about our health

Why is it important to know about individual or population FUNCTIONING?

- It makes it clear why we care about our health and why societies spend so much resources on health.
- Accounts for the value of health, the link to well-being
- Explains individual and population health behaviour – why we use health resources.
- Helps us predict future health needs, allocate resources.
- Helps us account for the relative impact and burden of different diseases and health conditions.
- It makes sense of the concept of ‘disability’ – not just medical state but limitation in functioning in the person’s environment

THE FUNCTIONING REVOLUTION!

The basis for conceptualizing health itself...

The platform for operationalizing health for measurement and health science...

A fundamental shift in the center of gravity of the health sciences...

The concept of functioning opens the door to ...

I. Functioning as the third indicator of health

II. Foundation for rehabilitation

III. Ageing across the life span

IV. Health systems research

V. A rethinking of health economics outcomes

VI. Health sciences

To realize the opportunities offered by this rethinking of health as functioning we must address formidable methodological, implementation, and communication challenges within health and social systems and society at large.