

WHAT IS PEDIATRIC FEEDING DISORDER (PFD)?

In January 2019, the *Journal of Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition* published “Pediatric Feeding Disorder: Consensus Definition and Conceptual Framework”, an article facilitated by Feeding Matters, defining pediatric feeding disorder (PFD).

Pediatric feeding disorder: impaired oral intake that is not age-appropriate, and is associated with medical, nutritional, feeding skill, and/or psychosocial dysfunction¹.

Although the consensus definition for pediatric feeding disorder has been widely accepted within the medical community, integration of PFD into the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) was needed for analysis of impairment and outcome patterns, accurate reimbursement and identification of the most applicable diagnosis.

PREVALENCE

Prevalence figures are a measure of a disease’s status and reflect the burden of a particular health condition. Based on a recent national prevalence study, the prevalence of PFD is between 1:23 children and 1:37 children². This is higher than other more well-known childhood conditions such as Autism (1:54) and Cerebral Palsy (1:323)³. Knowledge of the burden of PFD can help decision makers invest in needed system changes.

ICD CODE FOR PFD DIAGNOSIS

In the United States, the ICD-10 is monitored and updated by the National Center for Health Statistics through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The American Academy of Pediatrics partnered with Feeding Matters’ lead authors and Feeding Matters’ past Medical Director, Dr. Phalen in presenting a proposal for pediatric feeding disorder to receive its own diagnostic code in September 2019 and March 2020. By being present at both meetings, Feeding Matters ensured the patient voice was represented. Feeding Matters worked closely with professional associations and a coalition to publicly support the proposal in letters of support during the public commentary period.

On August 20th, 2020, Dr. Phalen contacted Feeding Matters to share that the pediatric feeding disorder ICD code was approved and was to be included in the United States ICD-11 in October 2021. In just 5 short years, Feeding Matters successfully served as the catalyst to the publication of the stand-alone definition and diagnosis of PFD – a condition so many before us have merely dismissed as a symptom of a different problem.

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
- The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.
- The National Coalition for Infant Health

IMPACT OF AN ICD CODE

- Improved accuracy and consistency of coding for PFD
 - Better epidemiological tracking
 - Improved analysis of disease patterns and treatment outcomes
- Avenue to advance quality measurement efforts
 - Inclusion of necessary healthcare professionals in care provision
- Advancements in research
 - Prevalence and incidence measures
 - Identification and tracking of the disorder
 - Development of new assessment and management practices
- Improved reimbursement accuracy
 - Reduces fraud, waste and abuse

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- Advancement in early identification of pediatric feeding disorder and overall health outcomes.

NEXT STEPS IN ADVOCACY

Now that an ICD-11 code for pediatric feeding disorder has been approved, Feeding Matters will advance our advocacy agenda to promote accurate and efficacious use of the PFD code. By working closely with healthcare professionals and insurance companies, we will develop strategies to promote appropriate use of diagnostic and treatment codes and prevent over-utilization and over-spending. Recognition of pediatric feeding disorder and judicial reimbursement practices are instrumental for improving health outcomes. These are the next steps of our advocacy agenda: inclusive insurance coverage and best practices for care.

References

1. Goday PS, Huh SY, Silverman A, et al. Pediatric Feeding Disorder: Consensus Definition and Conceptual Framework. *J Pediatr Gastroenterol Nutr.* 2019;68(1):124-129. doi:10.1097/MPG.0000000000002188
2. Kovacic K, Rein, ScM LE, Bhagavatula P, Kommareddy S, Szabo A, Goday PS, Pediatric Feeding Disorder: A Nationwide Prevalence Study, *The Journal of Pediatrics* (2020), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpeds.2020.07.047>.
3. National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention