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THE FIRST EXPERIENCE OF IMPLEMENTING THE INTERNATIONAL
STATISTICAL CLASSIFICATION OF HEALTH DISEASES AND
RELATED HEALTH PROBLEMS, 10TH REVISION

Report submitted by the Czech Statistical Office 1/

1. In 1994, the Czech Republic ranked among the countries that began to use the 10th revision of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related problems, prepared by the World Health Organization, in their statistical practice. This paper is intended to provide readers with a brief note about the principles and practice used to acquire these data in the Czech Republic.
2. In this respect, the statistical surveying relies on health documentation that has to be completed in the event of a death. A so-called "Dead Person Examination Sheet" is filled in by the physician at the time of death. The health department is responsible for this documentation in terms of methodology. The basic elements of this Dead Person Examination Sheet include the statement of the cause of death, given in words and figures according to the clinical or autopsy finding. The problems of precise formulation are fully within the province of the health service and the statistical service cannot really affect it in any way. To code the cause of death and process the information is a different matter. For these purposes the statistical and health services collaborate with each other. The health service is responsible for preparing nomenclatures, or taking over nomenclatures from the WHO, whereas the statistical service is in charge of collecting and processing data on causes of death.
3. In the processing of entering deaths in the register of births, marriages and deaths, the statistical report of death is filled in, stating the cause of death that was specified in the health documentation mentioned above. Fixing

1/ Prepared by Mr. Kraus.

the digit code for the cause of death is done centrally by the Czech Statistical Office with reference to revisions of causes of death that are made every 10 years. This method of collecting data on dead persons and causes of death enjoys the obvious advantage of maintaining methodological unity and responding fairly quickly to possible alterations in and modifications to the classifications. comparatively fast. Hence, the statistical service assumes the responsibility for the digit coding of the cause of death which then makes up part of each record in the file of dead persons in a given year.

4. The 10th revision of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems was put into use in the Czech Republic on 1 January 1994, which is later than had been recommended by the WHO. There are several causes behind the delay, the main one being the fact that the new independent Czech state emerged at the beginning of 1993 and this was, of course, reflected in the statistics, too. The actual processing procedure includes the transfer of individual cases of death from statistical reports onto a magnetic medium followed by verification of data acquisition for correctness (monthly batches). The first step of the verification is the check for permissible definition values (i.e., the first three alphanumeric characters), the second is the check for impermissible causes of death (from the viewpoint of sex and age of dead person). The third step includes the check for improbable causes of death, using the criteria of sex and age. Finally, the last check is the whole four-character diagnosis (i.e., the fourth character) to find whether the code is permissible for the diagnosis concerned.

5. Understandably, there is little experience available so far on how the introduction of the 10th revision will be reflected in the statistical practice. It is already apparent however, that the use of alphanumeric codes introduces difficulties, especially when it comes to checks and data collection, and that the whole process of data collection and processing is rather more complicated. These changes are fully justifiable provided that the 10th revision improves the explanatory power. This remains to be seen, however.