

SPOTLIGHT ON ELIZABETH BADLEY

Each month we "spotlight" someone who has made a difference with the ICF, and this month we focus on Dr. Elizabeth Badley. Called "Liz" or "Liza" by her friends, Liz started her career in health research in Britain where she worked with Philip Wood, the prime author of the ICIDH, at the ARC (Arthritis and Rheumatism Council) Epidemiology Research Unit in Manchester UK. She now lives and works in Toronto where she is the Director of the Arthritis Community Research and Evaluation Unit. Liz and her family emigrated to Canada in 1989. She and her husband have three children who are now grown (one is married, another engaged to be married) and at various stages of university education in three countries, Canada, the UK and the USA, and she wonders when any of them are ever going to leave school. However, they are a good excuse for traveling, which she likes to do. It is also good to come back to Toronto, which she regards as one of the most livable cities in North America.

One of the questions she is sometimes asked by her arthritis researcher colleagues is why she is so heavily involved in the WHO disability classifications. The answer is partly science and partly history. She was privileged, along with a sociologist colleague, Michael Bury, to work with Philip Wood on what became the ICIDH. Why Philip Wood became the prime author of the ICIDH is a good story. One driving force was that arthritis and related conditions are the most frequent causes of physical disability in the population. Working in epidemiology and public health, Philip was aware that it was important to be able to measure the population impact of these diseases. Back in the 70s there was no systematic way to do this. However, around that time he was working in Geneva on the 9th revision of the International Classification of Diseases, and was shown a draft version of a classification of impairments. He opted in, the scope was broadened, and the rest is history. Philip Wood is called the "Father of the ICIDH", and some call Liz the "Great Auntie of the ICIDH".

Liz continues to work on the population impact of arthritis and promote the development of interventions to reduce arthritis associated disability. All of the older citations which follow used the ICIDH, and the newer ones use the ICF as a guiding principle. Liz also played a part in the development of the latter classification, spending some time at WHO in Geneva working with the WHO revision team on the ICIDH/ICF. Her current research spans public health aspects of arthritis to application of models of disablement, in particular to the impact of arthritis on participation.

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