
**Traditional Chinese medicine —
Coding rules for Chinese medicines in
supply chain management**

*Médecine traditionnelle chinoise — Règles de codage des médecines
chinoises dans la gestion de la chaîne logistique*

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Foreword

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Introduction

The popularity of medicinal products derived from natural materials, particularly herbal materials, is increasing rapidly. For example, the international market for medicines used in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) was valued at USD 16 billion and is increasing at a rate of 10 % to 20 % per year.

Most goods traded internationally use bar coding to monitor the movement and use of the products. For example, even pencils and erasers have bar codes which permit their individual identification. However, this does not currently apply to medicines used in TCM. While at least 70 countries now have administrative systems in place to regulate TCM, the lack of bar coding is a barrier to the increasing trade and to ensuring the identity and quality of ingredients and products for the well-being of communities.

This document introduces a bar coding for TCM which is consistent with existing standards. It also provides a basis for similar coding systems for the products of related traditional health systems.

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