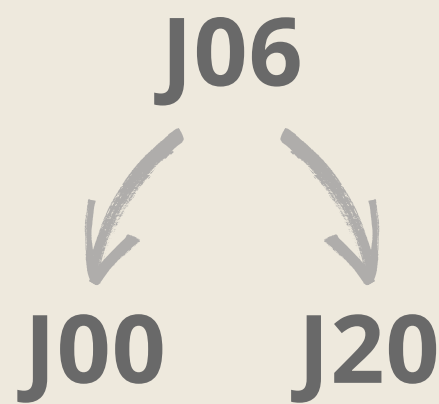


# Identifying Ambiguous Respiratory Infection Codes Through Regional Variations in Diagnoses

This study analyzed weekly national data on acute respiratory infections in Poland, using International Classification of Diseases (ICD) codes J00-J22, covering 292 million consultations in 380 administrative units.



Regional differences in diagnoses persisted across age groups and were not explained by health care use or milder diagnosis patterns.



Strong negative correlations between codes revealed classification ambiguity. For example, J06 (acute upper respiratory infections of multiple and unspecified sites) was often used interchangeably with J00 (common cold) and J20 (bronchitis).



Differences in how codes are applied create challenges for comparing health information across regions and countries.

*Source:* Walkowiak MP, Walkowiak D, Walkowiak J. Breaking ICD codes: identifying ambiguous respiratory infection codes via regional diagnosis heterogeneity. *Ann Fam Med.* 2025;23:10.1370/afm.3192