Personal Health Informatics. Editorial

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Summary

Objectives: To provide an editorial introduction to the 2012 IMIA Yearbook of Medical Informatics with an overview of its contents and contributors.

Methods: A brief overview of the main theme, and an outline of the purposes, contents, format, and acknowledgment of contributions for the 2012 IMIA Yearbook.

Results: This 2012 issue of the IMIA Yearbook highlights important developments in personal health informatics, impacting the activities in research, education and practice in this interdisciplinary field. There has been steady progress towards introducing individualization or personalization into informatics systems by taking advantage of the increasing amounts of personal information that is relevant to medical decisions and application in clinical practice. At the same time, there are serious issues about the limits of existing systems being able to effectively personalize information within both practical and ethical constraints so crucial to the practice of medicine. Recent literature bearing on these questions includes the selected papers published during the past 12 months, and articles reported by IMIA Working Groups on these topics.

Conclusion: Surveys of the main research sub-fields in biomedical informatics in the Yearbook provide an overview of progress and current challenges across the spectrum of the discipline, focusing on the challenges and opportunities involved in personal health informatics.

Keywords

Editorial, 2012 IMIA Yearbook of Medical Informatics, surveys of biomedical informatics, reviews of biomedical informatics, history of biomedical informatics, IMIA and its societies, personal health informatics

Introducing the 2012 Yearbook and its Theme on Personal Health Informatics

The Yearbook includes a number of articles focusing on the theme of Personal Health Informatics. It covers recent developments in personal health informatics, impacting the activities in research, education and practice in this interdisciplinary field. There has been steady progress towards introducing individualization or personalization into informatics systems by taking advantage of the increasing amounts of personal information that is relevant to medical decisions and application in clinical practice. At the same time, there are serious issues about the limits of existing systems being able to effectively personalize information within both practical and ethical constraints so crucial to the practice of medicine. Recent literature bearing on these questions includes the selected papers published during the past 12 months, and articles reported by IMIA Working Groups on these topics.

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Yearb Med Inform 2012:2-3
Information on IMIA and on its Regional Groups

The Yearbook contains detailed information about IMIA, its Member Societies, Regional Groups, Working Groups, and Special Interest Groups. A detailed report on the activities of IMIA regions is included with the help of Regional Editors. We would like to thank Rolf Engelbrecht (for EFMI), Michio Kimura (for APAMI), Ghislain Kowetchouflage (for HELINA), Carol Hullin (for IMIA LAC), Ramin Moghadam (for MEAHI) and Karen Greenwood and RoseMary MacVicar-Elliot (for the North American IMIA Member Societies) for their valuable contributions.

Acknowledgements

The editors gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the referees and guest editors. They would also like to thank the authors of the invited surveys, reviews and the historical paper, and the contributors to the Research and Education Section. They are most appreciative of the considerable skill, time, and effort devoted by Christian Lovis, the Managing Editor, and by the Section Editors, Claudine Bréant, Célia Boyer, Adrien Depeursinge, Arnaud Gaudinat, Alberto Guardia, Daniel Kubias, Rodolphe Meyer, Henning Müller, Anne-Marie Rassinoux, Patrick Ruch, and Linda Yip. They especially wish to thank the Editorial Assistant, Martina Hutter, from the Medical Faculty at the University of Heidelberg, without whose untiring efforts the Yearbook would not have been completed. The editors appreciate the contributions of the Advisory Board to the planning of this Yearbook. They are Reinhold Haux, Victor Maojo, Georges Mihalas, and Peter Murray.

The referees who contributed to the selection of articles in the 2012 Yearbook of Medical Informatics were:

- Samantha A. Adams, The Netherlands
- Kouhei Akazawa, Japan
- Elske Ameenwerth, Austria
- Manfredo Atzori, Switzerland
- Sany A. Azer, Saudi Arabia
- Fernan Gonzalez Bernaldo de Quiros, Argentina
- Olivier Bodenreider, USA
- Alex A.T. Bui, USA
- Anita Burgun, France
- Jean Charlet, France
- Ronald Cornet, The Netherlands
- Karen Courtney, Canada
- Stefan Darmoni, France
- Dina Demner Fushman, USA
- John T. Donnelly, USA
- Martin Dugas, Germany
- Walter Gall, Austria
- Dragan Gamberger, Croatia
- Natalia Grabar, France
- Stefan Gräber, Germany
- Thierry Hamon, France
- Michael Hogarth, USA
- Andreas Holzinger, Austria
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- Jeongeun Kim, Korea
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- Stéphane Meystre, USA
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- Jean Marc Palm, Canada
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- Frank Uckert, Germany
- Alfonso Valencia, Spain
- Toru Yao, Japan
- Xue Zhong Zhou, USA
- Tatjana Zrimec, Australia
- Pierre Zweigenbaum, France

About the Yearbook of Medical Informatics

The Yearbook of Medical Informatics of the International Medical Informatics Association (IMIA) is distributed through IMIA’s Member and Corresponding Member Societies worldwide. Since its inception in 1992 it has been the single most important publication summarizing the activities of IMIA, and showcasing the best of medical informatics research for the previous year. Its original survey articles give overviews of recent developments. The Yearbook remains a non-profit publication of IMIA, jointly published with Schattauer Verlag. It is currently subscribed to by 23 of IMIA’s member societies, providing access for about 25,000 individual members.

We are very pleased to announce that a number of very experienced and committed colleagues have accepted the responsibilities of leading the editorial team of the IMIA Yearbook for 2013. They are Marie-Christine Jaulent (CRC – Centre de Recherche de Cordeliers) and Brigitte Seroussi (Assistance Publique-Hopitaux de Paris), France, and Christoph Lehman (Johns Hopkins), USA. We look forward to their bringing new and exciting ideas for the ongoing development of the IMIA Yearbook, while maintaining its tradition of balanced scientific and practical assessment of the research progress in our field as it evolves in future years.

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- Daniel Racoceaux, Singapore
- Rainer Röhrig, Germany
- René Schneider, Switzerland
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- Xue Zhong Zhou, USA
- Tatjana Zrimec, Australia
- Pierre Zweigenbaum, France