Information on IMIA

International Medical Informatics Association

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2006 - 2009
Special Services
Hiroshi Takeda, Japan
2007 - 2010
Strategic Planning Implementation (provisional)
Peter Murray, United Kingdom
2007-2008

Executive Director
Steven A. Huesing, Canada
2004 - 2010

IMIA Web site: www.imia.org

IMIA REGIONS

EFMI: European Federation for Medical Informatics
George Mihalas, Romania, Vice President

IMIA-LAC: Federation of Health Societies in Latin America
Alvaro Margolis, Uruguay, Vice-President

APAMI: Asian Pacific Association for Medical Informatics
Yu-Chuan (Jack) Li, Taiwan, Vice President

HELINA: African Region
Ghislain Kouematchoua, Germany, Vice President

WELOME TO IMIA!

General

The International Medical Informatics Association is an independent organization established under Swiss law in 1989. The organization was founded in 1967 as Technical Committee 4 of the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP). Since 1979, it evolved has from a Special Interest Group of IFIP to its current status as a fully independent international organization.
IMIA continues to maintain its relationship with IFIP as an affiliate organization. IMIA also has close and collaborative ties with the World Health Organization (WHO) as a NGO (Non Government Organization) with appointed Liaison Officers from both the WHO and IMIA.
The working language of IMIA is English.

IMIA's Strategic Plan - Towards IMIA 2015

For the past five years IMIA has been laying the foundations for articulating a Strategic Plan. Under the guidance and leadership of Dr. Nancy Lorenzi, IMIA Past President and the Strategic Planning Taskforce, the plan was unanimously approved by the IMIAGeneral Assembly at MedInfo2007 in Brisbane, Australia in August, 2007 (coincidentally in conjunction with IMIA's 40th Birthday). The General Assembly also approved assistive funding for projects that support the tenets of the strategic plan to a maximum of $US 50,000.
Undertaking a strategic planning process is an overwhelming task. The complexity of issues for a global association operating with the current state of change and hyper evolution affecting not only informatics but health generally, is enormous. Many people have contributed to this document starting with the IMIA Strategic Planning Task Force[1], the IMIA General Assembly in 2005 (Geneva) and 2006 (Washington, DC) and the IMIA Board in 2007 (Nashville). IMIA is indebted to all who contributed; we express our thanks and gratitude.

Vision
There will be a world-wide systems approach for healthcare. Clinicians, researchers, patients and people in general will be supported by informatics tools, processes and behaviours that make it easy to do the right thing, in the right way, at the right time to improve health care for all. This systems approach will incorporate and integrate research, clinical care and public health. To achieve this vision it will require everyone being supported by informatics-based information and communication systems and technologies.
IMIA will provide **leadership and expertise** to the multidisciplinary health focused community and policy makers to enable the transformation of healthcare in accord with the worldwide vision to improve the health of the world population. IMIA will fulfill its vision by:

- Being the scientific informatics association through which the world's knowledge leaders come together to effectively and efficiently create, assemble, integrate, synthesize or assimilate **intellectual knowledge** that is required worldwide to advance

[1] Note: This group represents national members, working groups, corporations, academic members and IMIA headquarters.

biomedical informatics in its role of improving health and healthcare.
- Being the informatics association that effectively and efficiently **connects people and the nations** of the world to be able to accomplish the above purpose.

A UK strategy document on transformation mediated by technology states that "[Organizations] with serious transformational intent see technology as a strategic asset and not just a tactical tool.[2] Inherent in IMIA's role is to bring together, from a global perspective, scientists, researchers, users, vendors, developers, consultants and suppliers in an environment of cooperation and sharing to research and develop the concepts needed to support the organizations of the world seeking technology as transformational. As an organization committed to promoting best practice in the use of information and communication technologies within biomedical informatics and in health and healthcare, IMIA will ensure that it uses and promotes best practice in its own use of technology as a transformational strategic asset. The IMIA Strategic Plan, along with supporting and complementary publications and documents is available online on IMIA's Website, www.imia.org.

Subsequent to the approval of the Strategic Plan, IMIA has developed a Transition Plan to bridge between the IMIA of today and the envisioned IMIA of 2015. This transition plan, as a dynamic document, will be monitored by a proposed new IMIA Vice President for Strategic Planning Implementation; the role is currently filled on a provisional basis by Dr. Peter Murray, a member of the planning Committee and a current serving Board member.

In January 2008, IMIA released a world-wide request for proposals for projects that support the Strategic Plan indicating that IMIA would provide seed funding for approved proposals. These activities will be finalized at the IMIA General Assembly meeting in Goteborg, Sweden held in conjunction with MIE2008.

Membership

IMIA membership consists of National, Institutional and Affiliate Members and Honorary Fellows.

National Members represent individual countries. A member is a society, or a similar appropriate body, which is representative of the bio-medical, and health informatics activities within that country. In the absence of a national member, IMIA accommodates involvement by individuals through a "Corresponding" membership for developing countries as a means of providing encouragement and support to form a representative national society. National IMIA members may organize into regional groups. Currently, such **regions** exist for Latin America and the Caribbean (IMIA LAC), Europe (EFMI), Asia/Pacific (APAMI) and Africa (Helina). A North American Region is in the formulation stages. Regions are represented at the IMIA General Assembly and Board by Vice Presidents appointed by their respective regions.

Institutional Members consist of corporations and academic institutions. Corporate members currently include vendor, consulting, technology firms, publishers and national professional organizations. Academic members include universities, medical centres, research centres and other similar institutions. Academic members have recently organized to meet on annual basis in conjunction with the IMIA General Assembly to heighten connectivity and deal with areas of mutual concern.

Affiliate Members consist of international organizations that share an interest in the broad field of health and bio-medical informatics. In addition to WHO and IFIP, the International Federation of Health Records Organizations (IFHRO) is an affiliate member of IMIA. IMIA has recently appointed Liaison Officers to WHO (Dr. Antoine Geissbuhler, Switzerland) and IFIP Dr. Hiroshi Takeda, Japan) to work collaboratively on projects of mutual interest.

Honorary Fellows are individuals who have demonstrated exceptional meritorious service in furthering the aims and interests of the IMIA; fellowship is conferred for life.

Working and Special Interest Groups - The IMIA family includes a growing number of Working and Special Interest Groups, whose members consist of individuals who share common interests in a particular focal field. These groups hold Working Conferences on leading edge and timely health, medical and bio-medical informatics issues. Current and future activities of the Working and Special Interest Groups are posted on the IMIA Website at www.imia.org; a summary is included in the IMIA Yearbook.

Governance

IMIA is governed by a General Assembly that consists of one representative from each IMIA National and Institutional member, Honorary Fellows, Chairs of IMIA's Working Groups and a representative from IFIP, the World Health Organization, and each of IMIA's Regions. Only National Members have full voting rights. The General Assembly meets annually.

The Board of IMIA, elected by the General Assembly, conducts the

[2] Cabinet Office (2005) Transformational Government: Enabled by Technology. London: The Stationery Office. Available online at: http://www.cio.gov.uk/transformational_government/strategy/

association's affairs. The day-to-day operations are supported by the IMIA's Executive Director who is also responsible for IMIA's electronic services.

The officers of the Board and IMIA's vice presidents vigorously pursue IMIA's mission to:

- Monitor the range of special interest areas and focus support on new developments.
- Capitalize on the synergies and collective resources of IMIA's constituents.
- Minimize fragmentation between scientific and professional medical Informaticians.
- Ensure successful adaptation to changes in the medical informatics marketplace and discipline.
- Raise the profile and awareness of IMIA within and outside of the IMIA organization.
- Encourage cooperation between the scientific and commercial health informatics communities.
- Equitably balance support to emerging and existing IMIA members.
- Establish and maintain cooperation and harmony with organizations that emerge to address medical informatics issues.
- Continue to position IMIA as the gatekeeper for medical informatics issues in the international community

MedInfo's

IMIA organizes the internationally acclaimed tri-annual "World Congress on Medical and Health Informatics", MedInfo. MedInfo 2010 will be held in Capetown, South Africa September 13 -16, 2010. Potential participants, sponsors and exhibitors are encouraged to visit their web site at www.medinfo2010.org. The South African Health Informatics Association (SAHIA) is the hosting society for MedInfo 2010. This marks the 1st time that a MedInfo has been held on the African Continent.

Previous MedInfo's have been held in Stockholm, Sweden (1974), Toronto, Canada, (1977), Tokyo, Japan (1980), Amsterdam, The Netherlands (1983), Washington, USA (1986), Beijing/ Singapore (1989), Geneva, Switzerland (1992), Vancouver, Canada (1995), Seoul, Korea (1998) London, United Kingdom (2001) San Francisco, USA (2004), and Brisbane Australia (2007).

Current Major Initiatives

Regions notably HELINA (Africa) and IMIA-LAC (South America and Caribbean). In Africa, in collaboration with the WHO, IMIA assisted in the hosting of a major pan-African Conference (2007) in Mali followed by a meeting of African leaders to organize a sustainable HELINA region; this has resulted in a draft constitution for HELINA; several new African nations joined the IMIA family. This meeting was followed up by another stakeholder meeting in Yaoundé, Cameroons in November, 2007.

To facilitate growth and progress in South America, IMIA has provided funding to IMIA-LAC to support representative participation at "InfoLAC 2008 - Advances in medical informatics and their impact on healthcare systems" (www.infolac2008.com.ar).The congress , to be held October 28 - 31, 2008, is collaboration on the part of groups from all over Latin America - Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Brazil, Mexico, and others. Led by Argentina's Medical Informatics Association (AAIM) and the society's President, Juan Carlos Di Lucca, it also serves as the 1st Argentinean Medical Informatics Congress.

In addition, IMIA's Vice-president Special affairs, Hiroshi Takeda (Japan) continues to liaise with Middle East countries in preparation for a future Middle East region.

These initiatives are completely aligned with the Strategic Plan and the philosophical personal vision of IMIA's new President, Prof. Dr. Reinhold Haux who has taken on the difficult task of overseeing the implementation and execution of the Plan and to foster his personal vision:

"That IMIA provides a model example for successful, tolerant and peaceful collaboration of individuals, beyond any nations and cultures, for the sake of health and quality of life of the people in our world".

IMIA code of Ethics

IMIA reached a major milestone by the adoption of the "IMIA Code of Ethics for Health Information Professionals" in 2002. The code has been translated into several languages and is freely available to the public at IMIA's website www.imia.org.

Official Journals

Schattauer GmbH's *Methods of Information in Medicine* and Elsevier Science's *International Journal of Medical Informatics* have been accorded the status of "an Official Journal of the International Medical Informatics Association" since 2003. *Methods of Information in Medicine* publishes IMIA news and a Calendar of events in each issue.

General

IMIA continues to develop its communication capabilities through its website www.imia.org. The site contains profiles on its members, working groups and activities. IMIA is constantly striving to further the services it provides to its members and the informatics community in general by promoting free interaction among and between its member network and the bio-medical and health informatics community at large.