

From Ambient Assisted Living to Global Information Management: IMIA-Referencing Publications in 2008

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Summary

Objective: To give an overview of publications directly referencing the International Medical Informatics Association (IMIA) in 2008.

Method: Systematic search for references to IMIA over the two official IMIA journals, and reports of the recent IMIA General Assembly and Board meetings, using PubMed/Medline, supplemented by searches with Google Scholar and Google Books.

Results: Beyond the IMIA Yearbook 2008, 38 IMIA-referencing publications were found by these searches, encompassing a broad range of topics, ranging from ambient assisted living technologies in home environments to global information management methodologies.

Conclusions: In 2008 IMIA-referencing publications found through both medical and general search engines were predominantly in journals. In years where IMIA's world congress on medical informatics, Medinfo take place, it could be expected that the Medinfo proceedings will also play an important role in referencing IMIA explicitly.

Keywords

International Medical Informatics Association, IMIA, IMIA publications, medical informatics, health informatics, biomedical informatics

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1 Introduction

IMIA – the International Medical Informatics Association [1] has a long and substantial publication history [2]. New knowledge in medical informatics often has been introduced and discussed in these publications. Of special relevance are the proceedings of the Medinfo congresses, IMIA's world congresses (from 1967) and those of other IMIA or IMIA-related conferences, the IMIA Yearbooks of Medical Informatics (from 1992) and publications in IMIA's official journals. In addition to the above-mentioned conferences, major sources for presenting and discussing new knowledge are meetings and working conferences of IMIA's working groups.

In order to make a record of such publications, the two current editors and a past editor of the IMIA Yearbook have decided to summarize them annually, starting with IMIA-referencing publications in 2008, to be documented in this Yearbook of Medical Informatics 2009.

2 Methods

To systematically identify IMIA-related publications we have searched:

- the two official IMIA journals, the International Journal of Medical Informatics (IJMI) and Methods of Information in Medicine (MIM);

- reports of the recent IMIA General Assembly and Board meetings, in particular in the reports of the IMIA Vice-President for Working Groups;
- PubMed/Medline, with the limitations a) publication year is “2008” and b) “IMIA” is in title, abstract or elsewhere;
- Google Scholar and Google Books, searching for IMIA.

All searches were done in May and June 2009. Articles, directly published in the IMIA Yearbook of Medical Informatics 2008, were not included in the searches, as they are all relevant, and the reader can directly refer to the Yearbook for them.

3 Results

For 2008 we identified 38 publications outside the IMIA Yearbook of Medical Informatics 2008. The majority of publications directly referring to IMIA were found in one of IMIA's official journals, MIM.

One of the fundamental goals of IMIA is to further the dissemination and exchange of knowledge, information and technology. Doing so involves the promotion of good practices in reporting evaluation studies in health informatics (STARE-HI, [3]), as well as the development of publications serving the evolving needs of our diverse community. For instance, a debate was initiated in 2008, discussing the neces-

sity of a new journal or magazine, focussing on applications [4, 5]. Recently this has resulted in the creation of a new journal, Applied Clinical Informatics, about to be launched, and now endorsed by IMIA as an official publication.

Another key role of IMIA is to represent the medical and health informatics field with the World Health Organization and other international professional and governmental organizations [6]. In April 2008 the World Health Organization (WHO) organized a strategic planning workshop on the future of WHO's Global Observatory for eHealth. IMIA is non-governmental organization of WHO. IMIA members participated in this meeting. The outcomes of this WHO workshop was published in MIM issue 4 of 2008 [7]. Another report on IMIA's strategic plan in the context of global eHealth initiatives can be found in [8].

As a bridge organization, IMIA aims at promoting the cross-fertilization of health informatics information and knowledge across professional and geographical boundaries. Japan has a long and successful tradition in medical informatics, and the annual medical informatics conferences of IMIA's national member JAMI, the Japanese Association for Medical Informatics, are currently, to the knowledge of the authors, the largest national medical informatics conferences in the world. Probably because of language barriers, international journal publications referencing Japanese medical informatics developments (as well as those of other non-English-translated proceedings in most other countries and regions, such as IMIA-LAC in 2008) are unfortunately relatively infrequent. In order to overcome this situation a special topic with selected papers from the Japanese Congress of Medical Informatics of 2007 has been published in MIM issue 6 from 2008 (introduction and overview in [9], research publications in [10] – [15]).

Leading the international medical and health informatics communities throughout the 21st century, IMIA's working groups are exploring various

domains of innovation. In 2008, a special issue edited by IMIA's working group on smart homes and ambient assisted living was published, considering a variety of aspects in the context of aging societies (introduction and overview in [16], research publications in [17] – [22]). Another issue of MIM contained a special topic on pervasive healthcare, with selected papers from a correspondingly named, and IMIA-supported conference (introduction and overview in [23], keynote paper in [24], research publications in [25] – [33]), a theme also reported in other journals, highlighting the need for international research collaboration on health-enabling technologies for pervasive healthcare [34].

Informatics approaches to problems in nursing practice and organization have frequently involved the IMIA Nursing Informatics (NI) Group [35, 36], while the IMIA Code of Ethics is cited as a precedent for future globalization issues in health care [37], and the IMIA recommendations on education in health and medical informatics is cited in a review of pharmacy informatics syllabi in the US [38].

4 Discussion

2008 was a non-Medinfo year. IMIA-related publications were mostly found in journals. In Medinfo years, the Medinfo proceedings will of course also become an important source of IMIA-related references. Besides the publications in the IMIA Yearbook of Medical Informatics 2008, most IMIA-related publications were in one of the two official journals of IMIA, MIM. This has changed over the years, and can be expected to change in the future. With topics ranging from ambient assisted living technologies in home environments to global information management methodologies, the breadth in content was considerable.

The authors of this brief review have compiled a first set of direct, explicit

references to IMIA and some of its 2008 activities from the literature. We expect to carry out a more comprehensive and systematic set of searches for 2009 and report on them in the 2010 IMIA Yearbook.

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