Medinfo2010 in Cape Town, South Africa

The Medinfo2010 Local Organising Committee (LOC) and Scientific Programme Committee (SPC) are continuing their hard work to ensure a successful 13th International Congress on Medical Informatics (Medinfo2010) in Cape Town, South Africa on September 12–15, 2010. This will be the first African Medinfo, and promises a mix of Medinfo tradition and African innovation. It promises to boost exposure to grass-roots healthcare delivery and the underpinning health information systems. This will open the door to new academic partnerships into the future and help to nurture a new breed of health informaticians.

In these times of economic uncertainty, the high level of submissions of papers, posters, panels and other scientific contributions, which are at a level comparable to those for Medinfo2007 in Brisbane, is extremely encouraging. The review process will be completed in the next few weeks, and decisions on acceptance will be notified to first authors by February 28, 2010.

Among the keynote speakers will be Professor Nada Lavrac (Department of Knowledge Technologies at Jozef Stefan Institute, Ljubljana, Slovenia), Dr. Marion Ball (past president of IMIA, who should need no introduction to readers), and Professor Dr. Ben Bondo Monga (Professor of Medical Informatics, Biostatistics and Epidemiology at University of Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo).

The event website now has information on registration and booking accommodation. Bookmark the website at http://www.medinfo2010.org/ and visit regularly for updates. Medinfo2010 also has a Twitter stream (http://twitter.com/medinfo2010) and will be announcing other forms of interaction in due course. Updates can also be found on the IMIA Twitter stream (http://twitter.com/IMIAtweets).

Applied Clinical Informatics (ACI) eJournal Launches

Applied Clinical Informatics (ACI) is a new official eJournal of the International Medical Informatics Association (IMIA) and the Association of Medical Directors of Information Systems (AMDIS), and is published by Schattauer. This is Schattauer’s first online journal. Full information about this new development, including instructions for authors, can be found at the journal website – http://www.aci-journal.org

Christoph U. Lehmann, editor-in-chief of ACI, reports that the first editorial, entitled “In search of dialogue and discourse in applied clinical informatics”, is available for free download via the ACI website. ACI will publish approximately 100 peer-reviewed articles per year online. The target audience is an international and influential readership, including chief information officers, chief executive officers, chief financial officers, medical informatics researchers, nurse informaticians, consultants, public health officials, vendors and IT safety healthcare providers.

ACI aims to establish a platform for knowledge sharing between clinical medicine and health IT specialists, and further intends to bridge the gap between visionary design and successful and pragmatic deployment. The core editorial subject matters of ACI include clinical information systems (including but not limited to electronic medical records and systems, personal health records, electronic prescribing, nursing information systems, and GP information systems); administrative and management systems; eHealth systems; information technology development, deployment and evaluation; socio-technical aspects of information technology and health IT training.

ACI has a flourishing Facebook site (http://www.facebook.com/pages/ACI-Applied-Clinical-Informatics-Journal/163900215980) and a Twitter stream at http://twitter.com/ACI_Journal. Further information on this new online journal, including author instructions, contact details, and subscription offers, is available on the ACI website at http://www.aci-journal.org.

IMIA Board and General Assembly Meetings 2010

The IMIA Board is expected to hold its early 2010 meeting in Vancouver, BC, Canada at the end of May, in conjunction with COACH’s e-Health 2010 conference (May 30 to June 2, 2010 at Vancouver Convention Centre – http://www.e-healthconference.com). The late 2010 Board meeting and IMIA General Assembly meetings for 2010 will be held on September 11 and 12 respectively at Medinfo2010 in Cape Town, South Africa. Further information will be available on the IMIA website nearer to the events.
Arie Hasman Farewell Symposium – Amsterdam,  
January 15, 2010

Arie Hasman is well known to anyone who has been involved in health and biomedical informatics, especially in Europe, or in publishing, in recent years. After a 35-year international career, Arie Hasman will retire by the end of 2009. In his honour, and to recognise his contributions to the biomedical informatics field, a farewell conference/symposium will be held on Friday, January 15, 2010 (from 12:00 to 19:00) in the Academic Medical Center, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Anyone interested in attending this conference, or who would like further information about the arrangements for this event, or other plans to honour Arie, should e-mail afscheid.hasman@gmail.com

Arie started his career in biomedical informatics in 1974 at the Free University of Amsterdam, and has been active in many national and international research and educational projects, including several EU-funded projects. He was editor of the International Journal of Medical Informatics and is still a member of the editorial boards of several journals. After chairing the Department of Medical Informatics at the University of Maastricht for 16 years, he was appointed chair of the Department of Medical Informatics of the Academic Medical Centre – University of Amsterdam in 2004. He is (co)author of about 250 publications and a number of books in the areas of signal analysis, image analysis, information systems, knowledge-based systems and computer-aided instruction. While he is formally retiring, Arie is keen to continue his involvement with informatics colleagues and will be engaging in several new ventures in the coming months.

IMIA Health Information Systems Working Group conference, 2010

Christian Lovis, chair of the IMIA Health Information Systems Working Group (IMIA HIS WG), has announced that the WG will be organising a two-day workshop on “Health Information Systems – 30 Years of Evolution”, that will take place just before the Medinfo 2010 Conference in Cape Town, South Africa. Christian notes that 2010 is a very important date for the IMIA Health Information Systems (HIS) WG, and Cape Town a very special place. In 1979, the first HIS working conference was held in Cape Town, South Africa. As a result of that conference the International Medical Informatics Association (IMIA) created a working group on hospital information systems. That working group has since organised a series of working conferences (Nijmegen, Goettingen, Durham, Heidelberg) of which the proceedings have been published.

As the next World Congress on Medical Informatics will take place in September 2010 in Cape Town (http://www.medinfo2010.org/), this offers a unique opportunity to have another HIS working conference in conjunction with Medinfo where the evolution over a 30-year period can be discussed and challenges for the coming decades identified. The event is scheduled to be held on September 10–12, 2010 in Stellenbosch, South Africa (very close to Cape Town). Further details will be advised in due course. At the two-day conference, several of the pioneers in the field will be present, together with new talent; there will be three plenary sessions, discussion groups and invited speakers, and the outcomes of the conference will be reported during a panel at Medinfo.

MIE2011 and other EFMI Events, 2010–11

MIE2011, the 23rd international conference of EFMI, the European Federation for Medical Informatics (http://www.efmi.org), will be held in Oslo and Akerhus in Norway, and organised by the Norwegian Society for Medical Informatics. MIE2011 will be held on August 28–31, 2011, with the theme “User centred in a networked clinical reality”. Further information will become available on the conference website at http://www.mie2011.org, or through the mailing list.

The 2010 Special Topic Conference (STC) of the European Federation for Medical Informatics (EFMI) will take place in Reykjavik, Iceland on June 2–4, 2010. The event has the theme “Seamless care – safe care. The challenges of interoperability and patient safety in health care”. Further information is at http://www.sky.is/efmi-stc-2010-.html. The conference is held with the endorsement of the Ministry of Health, the Directorate of Health and the University of Iceland; the venue will be the University Center – Háskólatorg at the University of Iceland in central Reykjavik.

The 2011 Special Topic Conference (STC) of the European Federation for Medical Informatics (EFMI) will be in Ptuj, Slovenia. The event will be held on April 13–14, 2011, with the theme “E-health over borders without boundaries”, and further details will become available on the website at http://www.stc2011.org
IMIA Medicine 2.0 Award and Medicine 2.0´09 Conference

The IMIA Medicine 2.0 Award, made to “the best or most promising use or discussion of Web 2.0 for providing actual or potential benefit in medicine, healthcare, and/or health and biomedical informatics” was made at the Medicine 2.0’09 conference, held in Toronto, Canada on September 17–18, 2009.

The award was given to the paper “Pandemics in the Age of Twitter: Content Analysis of "Tweets" During the H1N1 Outbreak” by Cynthia Mei Chew and Gunther Eysenbach. Cynthia presented an interesting study, demonstrating practical use of Web 2.0 technologies to address health-related research. The scientific quality of the research itself was good, the methods and results clearly presented, and Cynthia was both confident in her manner and showed that she had a detailed understanding of the study, its implications, and further work that might be needed. The IMIA Medicine 2.0 Award is providing a financial contribution to support the development of the presentation into a paper to be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal for publication.

Reports are available at http://medicine20congress.blogspot.com/2009/09/imia-medicine-20-award.html and http://medicine20congress.blogspot.com/2009/09/pandemics-in-age-of-twitter-content.html on the award and Cynthia’s paper. The Medicine 2.0’09 event was as dynamic and interesting as the inaugural 2008 event; attendance held up to the previous year’s levels, and provided a wide range of papers, panels and other presentations that explored emerging practical applications of Web 2.0 technologies and approaches in health and medicine. The conference website (http://www.medicine20congress.com) provides links to the abstracts, as well as photos, presentations, podcasts and other forms of interaction with and reporting from the event, including the reports of individual presentations on the conference blog at http://medicine20congress.blogspot.com

International Workshop on e-Health in Emerging Economies, 2010

A three-day workshop, IWEEE 2010: the human factor – International Workshop on e-Health in Emerging Economies, will be held in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain on February 10–12, 2010. The event is being supported by, and has collaboration from, the International Medical Informatics Association (IMIA) Open Source Health Informatics Working Group.

Among the presenters will be Thomas Karopka, vice-chair of the International Medical Informatics Association Open Source Working Group (IMIA OS WG) and chair of the European Federation for Medical Informatics Libre/Free Open Source Working Group (EFMI LIF OSS WG), and Alvin Marcelo, the Philippine representative to the Asia Pacific Association for Medical Informatics (APAMI) and the International Medical Informatics Association (IMIA) and chair of the IMIA Health Informatics for Development Working Group. Full information is on the workshop website at http://www.iwhee.org/index.html

The Last IMIA News Pages in Methods

This will be the last IMIA News pages in Methods in this form. In an era where people increasingly expect their news electronically and instantly, whether via the Web, e-mail or RSS feeds, or by the ubiquity of 24-hour news channels on TV and radio, ‘news’ pages that are reporting items from several weeks, or even months, previously are something of an oxymoron. We are extremely grateful to Schattauer, as publishers, for the opportunity to publish these pages, and to all their staff who have been involved in helping us in recent years.

The strong links between IMIA and Schattauer will, however, continue, and we hope that they will continue to flourish. In addition to Methods, we have the new online journal Applied Clinical Informatics (ACI) as an official IMIA journal. IMIA will continue to provide the Methods Table of Contents for each issue to its members, and the wider community, on the new IMIA News website. In addition, we will highlight items from Schattauer’s journals, and look forward to exploring other forms of collaboration in the coming years.

IMIA’s blog-based news website was launched in June 2009. This is part of the longer-term development of services for IMIA, its members, and the global health and biomedical informatics community, as outlined in the IMIA Strategic Plan. The site is at http://imianews.wordpress.com and will continue to develop over the rest of the year in response to feedback, in particular suggestions for additional features, and modes of interaction. The site traffic is rising by over 100% per month, on average, and an increasing number of people are subscribing to receive e-mail and RSS feed updates. For all comments, and for submitting news items, please contact IMIA at: news@imia-services.org

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