IMIA General Assembly Elects New Leadership for 2009 – Approves New Vice President Position

The IMIA General Assembly (GA) held its 2008 Annual General Meeting in Goteborg, Sweden on May 25, in conjunction with EFMI’s MIE2008 – “eHealth beyond the horizon – get IT there”.

The GA approved a new Director’s position, “Vice President Strategic Plan Implementation” to coordinate and oversee the implementation of the IMIA Strategic Plan – Toward IMIA 2015 that was approved unanimously by the GA at its meeting in Brisbane last August.

The following board members were elected:

**Officers**

**President Elect** – Antoine Geissbuhler (Switzerland)

Dr. Geissbuhler is a professor of Medical Informatics and Chairman of the Department of Radiology and Medical Informatics at Geneva University; Director of Medical Informatics at Geneva University Hospitals and President of the Health On the Net (HON) Foundation. He will serve as President-elect for 2009-2010 and then as IMIA President from 2010 to 2013. He currently serves as IMIA’s Liaison Officer to the WHO and IMIA Yearbook Editor.

**Secretary** – Lyn Hanmer (South Africa)

Lyn Hanmer trained as a biomedical engineer and is currently a scientist and Division Manager, Health Informatics R&D Coordination, at the South African Medical Research Council in Cape Town. She is the Secretary of the South African Health Informatics Association and chair of the Local Organizing Committee for MedInfo 2010 (http://www.medinfo2010.org/) which will be held in Cape Town September 13-16, 2010. Ms. Hanmer will assume her position after the 2008 General Assembly meeting in 2009.

**Directors**

**Vice President, Working and Special Interest Groups** – Hyeoun-Ae Park (Korea)

Dr. Park is a professor of Biostatistics and Health Informatics at the Seoul National University College of Nursing in Seoul, Korea. She is an active member of IMIA’s Nursing Informatics Special Interest Group (NISIG) currently serving as Vice Chair for Administration and Finance. Dr. Park will assume the position immediately.

**Vice President Strategic Plan Implementation** – Peter Murray (United Kingdom)

Dr. Murray has been doing “double duty”; he has served in this position on a provisional basis since the GA meeting in Brisbane as well as discharging his obligations as Vice President Working and Special Interest Groups. Dr. Murray is a Founding Fellow and Director of the Centre for Health Informatics Research (CHIRAD), a virtual centre based in the United Kingdom. His election will take effect immediately.

**Vice President Membership** – Fernando Martin-Sanchez (Spain)

Dr. Martin-Sanchez, the current incumbent of this post, is the Head of the Department of Medical Bioinformatics at the Institute of Health “Carlos III” in Madrid and Assistant Professor of Bioinformatics, School of Biomedical Sciences at the University Francisco de Vitoria.

**Vice President Services** – Casmir Kulikowski (USA)

Dr. Kulikowski is a professor of Computer Science at Rutgers University in Newark, New Jersey. He was a Founding Fellow with the American Academy of Medical Informatics and the Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AAAI). He is the current incumbent of this position; he also serves as an Editor of the IMIA Yearbook.

Drs. Martin-Sanchez and Kulikowski have been elected for a second term of office; their terms will take effect after the IMIA GA in Hiroshima, Japan on November 25, 2009.

**Nominating Committee**

The slate of nominees was presented to the GA by the IMIA Nominating Committee, chaired by Nancy Lorenzi, IMIA Past President. Dr. H. M. Goh, Malaysia and Prof. Dr. Attila Nazlady from Hungary are the other members of the Committee.

All candidates were unanimously elected.
People on the Move

Jacob Hofdijk, Special Adviser DBC onderhoud Partner in CaseMix from Oegstgeest, the Netherlands, was recently elected as the President of EFMI; he succeeds George Mihalas, Victor Babes University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Timisoara, Romania. Dr. Mihalas has joined the Board of IMIA as the EFMI Vice President to IMIA, replacing Robert Baud.

IMIA Welcomes New National Members

IMIA president Prof. Reinhold Haux is pleased to welcome new National Members to IMIA’s family.

Venezuela – represented by the Venezuelan Association of Computer Science in Health (AVIS), http://www.avis.org.ve

The IMIA representative is AVIS President, Prof. Dr. Argüello Osmán, OCS’s and PGS General Manager, Proyectos de Gestión en Salud C.A. (PROGES A C.A.)

Ivory Coast – represented by the Ivorian Society of Biosciences and Health Informatics

The Chair of the Society is Prof. Somian Francis Ehua, Head, and Emergency Service at the Yopougon University Hospital Center in Abidjan.

The IMIA representative is Dr. Innocent M. Nan an, dental surgeon, United Nations Operation for Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI).

TAMI – the Taiwan Association for Medical Informatics (http://www.medinfo.org.tw) has changed its status as an academic member of IMIA to that of a national member.

Yu Chaun (Jack) Li, President of APAMI, the Asia Pacific Association for Medical Informatics, is the IMIA representative.

IMIA Endorses STARE-HI

The “Statement on Reporting Evaluation Studies in Health”, STARE-HI was officially endorsed by IMIA at the GA on May 25. The objective of STARE-HI is to develop guidelines for the publication of evaluation studies of health informatics applications.

A collaborative study by a group of researchers and scientists across Europe resulted in a set of STARE-HI principles to be addressed in papers describing evaluations of health informatics interventions. These principles include formulation of title and abstract, of introduction (e.g. scientific background, study objectives), study context (e.g. organizational setting, system details), methods (e.g. study design, outcome measures), results (e.g. study findings, unexpected observations) and discussion and conclusion of an IT evaluation paper.

The group consequently developed a comprehensive list of principles relevant for properly describing health informatics evaluations. When manuscripts submitted to health informatics journals as well as general medical journals adhere to these aspects, readers will be better positioned to place the studies in a proper context and judge their validity and generalizability. It will also be possible to judge better whether papers will fit in the scope of meta-analyses of health informatics interventions. STARE-HI may also be used for study planning and hence positively influence the quality of evaluation studies in health informatics. The group believes that better publication of (both quantitative and qualitative) evaluation studies is an important step towards the vision of evidence-based health informatics.

David Bates, Chief, Division of General Internal Medicine at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston MA, has been selected as the IMIA Vice President for the North American Region. The North American Region, consisting of AMIA, the American Medical Informatics Association and COACH: Canada’s Health Informatics Association is currently developing its charter.

Ukraine – Ukrainian Association of Computer Medicine (UACM) (http://www.uacm.kharkov.ua) was re-instated as a national member of IMIA, having been an observer member for the past three years.

UACM’s IMIA representative is Prof. Oleg Yu Mayorov, Chief Medical Informatician of the Ukraine.

IMIA now has a national membership of 52 countries with an additional 32 countries represented through corresponding members. IMIA continues to actively promote biomedical and health informatics particularly in South America, Africa and the Middle East in collaboration with the WHO and other partners.

The document, also endorsed by EFMI, the European Federation for Medical Informatics, is available online at http://iig.umit.at/efmi. It is scheduled to be published shortly.

Comments are welcomed by the lead authors, Jan Talmon, Maastricht University, the Netherlands (talmon@MI.unimaas.nl) and Elske Ammenwerth, UMIT – University for Health Sciences, Medical Informatics and Technology, Tyrol, Austria (elske.ammenwerth@umit.at)

Information on further work on STARE-HI is provided through the mailing list of the EFMI-WG on Assessment of Hospital Information Systems (http://iig.umit.at/efmi), free membership to the mailing list through http://listman.umit.at/mailman/listinfo/eval.
IMIA to Review Potential of a Biannual MedInfo Cycle

MedInfos – “Triennial World Congresses on Medical Informatics” have been the centerpiece of IMIA’s activities since 1974 while it was still a technical committee of IFIP. MedInfo continues to be the major truly international global congress for the health and biomedical informatics academic community. As such, it portrays most of the goals and mission of IMIA and harmonizes completely with IMIA’s strategic plan “Towards 2015”.

A MedInfo is an IMIA international congress that is hosted by a member country’s representative society; the hosting society is selected by IMIA’s General Assembly based on a competitive bidding process.

In the past decade we have witnessed enormous changes in the pace and inclusivity in the evolution of “information technologies” in the global society. Of these, the impact on healthcare has been both profound and dramatic.

The increasing focus on the use of information technologies is likely personified by the “Electronic Health Record” (EHR) or variations on the theme. Suffice it to say that the underlying principles have enjoyed significant political and media support in the UK, Canada, Australia, the US and many European countries and, in a somewhat different context, the World Health Organization. Investment by governments and their partners in these initiatives is in the billions.

Given the above, IMIA President, Reinhold Haux, held the view that it is IMIA’s responsibility to ensure that our constituents have the opportunity to set the pace for our current environment rather than keep pace with it. It is necessary to be more currently informed about the latest innovations in the field and to meet more frequently than has been our tradition for the past 40 years.

Prof. Haux has authored a discussion paper “On IMIA’s World Conferences: A proposal to meet the new and growing demands of high-quality international conferences by IMIA and jointly with IMIA’s regional partner organizations”. The paper emphasizes the need for a positive and collaborative rather than a competitive approach.

The paper holds that the need to be informed about and to discuss recent progress in our field has obviously increased within the last years. Together with our regional organizations this has to be discussed in order to facilitate a timely joint portfolio of international conferences where high-level, peer-reviewed results of health and biomedical informatics research and practice can be presented and discussed, independent of financial or political interests.

The paper, widely distributed prior to the IMIA GA meeting in Gothenburg, was debated and discussed at the meeting itself. The final result of the discussion was that the GA approved the proposal of a biannual Medinfo cycle in principle; with an eight-year cycle of rotation; to start from Medinfo 2013.

The GA also appointed an 18-member task force charged with the preparation of a detailed proposal for the GA’s approval. Chaired by the IMIA President the participants include representation from all existing and potential IMIA regions, national members, working and special interest groups, academic members and select members of the board.

These documents are on the IMIA website at www.imia.org – Resources.