

IMIA REPORT TO IFIP GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ROME, ITALY

SEPTEMBER 22-24, 1982

IMIA has made considerable progress since the last report issued to the General Assembly in September 1981. Progress has been made in establishing and improving contacts with the lesser-developed countries in South-East Asia and Latin America. The organizational and financial structure has improved with the establishment of the IMIA Secretariat. The Scientific Policy document has been completed and the by-laws are in the process of being revised. The IMIA Newsletter is now a twice-yearly publication and is moving towards quarterly publication. It is receiving wide distribution through its national member societies. The activities of IMIA over the last year can be summarized as follows.

1.0 IMIA Secretariat Following the Dublin meeting, the IFIP Foundation was discontinued and the IMIA Secretariat moved from the Paulus Potterstraat address to its new location at Enschedepad 41-43, ML 1324 GB Almere-Stad, The Netherlands. Telex 70424. Telephone (03240) 31341. Mr. Arvid Gundersen remains at the IMIA Secretariat, as well as being concerned with a considerable portion of the administrative work for MEDINFO 83. The transition from Paulus Potterstraat to the new address has stabilized and is working well. The IMIA Secretariat, apart from the distribution and centralization tasks, is completing a new brochure describing IMIA's activities, as well as dealing with the interface between IMIA and MEDINFO S3 organization and with the North-Holland Publishing House.

2.0 Working Groups Currently IMIA has six Working Groups. A new policy proposed at the IMIA Board Meeting in Srinigar, April 1982, was that if no report were received from a Working Group within one year, a motion would automatically be put to the next IMIA General Assembly that such a group be considered inactive and be terminated. Current Working Groups are:

2.1 Working Group 1 - Information Science and Medical Education is becoming active and will hold its next Working Conference in Chamonix, France, March 21-25, 1983.

2.2 Working Group 2 - Application of New Technology to Health Informatics, chaired by Mr. Roukens, is looking at coordination with Technical Committees of IFIP. Because of Mr. Roukens' activities in MEDINFO 83, the Working Group has been relatively inactive.

2.3 Working Group 3 - E.C.G. Computerized Applications is chaired by Dr. C. Zwyietz and has recently published the guidelines and recommendations for computerized electrocardiography. IMIA is awaiting a report on this Working Group prior to making a decision at the next General Assembly.

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2.4 Working Group 4 - Data Security and Confidentiality chaired by Dr. David Kenny, holds its third Working Conference in Kiel, F.R.G., September 7-10, 1982. Several of its recommendations have had an impact on legal proposals by countries in the E.E.C..

2.5 Working Group 5 - Computers in the Doctor's Office chaired by Dr. Reichertz of the F.R.G., is beginning to meet some defined needs in this rapidly developing area, but is having problems organizing meetings with its widely-dispersed group. It was thought that a corresponding arrangement would be feasible, but this apparently has not worked. Professor Reichertz is preparing a report for the next IMIA General Assembly meeting.

2.6 Working Group 6 - The Role of Informatics in the Classification and Coding of Health Data, chaired by Professor Cote of Canada, is looking into the impact of informatics on new international codes or classification systems of health care.

2.7 New Working Groups Two have been discussed, and IMIA is awaiting formal proposals. These are: "Biomedical Pattern Recognition" and "Health Informatics for the Disabled". These proposals will be reviewed at the next meeting of the IMIA General Assembly in Melbourne.

3.0 Working Conferences A scientific policy document was approved at the IMIA General Assembly meeting in Florence in 1981, defining MEDINFO Conferences, Open Conferences and Working Conferences, as well as reimbursement policy, whereby conferences funded by IMIA will be expected to be self-supporting, and all monies advanced by IMIA will be loans.

IMIA held four Working Conferences in 1981. They were as follows.

3.1 EFMI Annual Conference, Toulouse (France), March 1981: This was a most successful conference from a scientific, as well as from a financial, point of view. This conference is the European Regional conference of IMIA and is held yearly, except in the year of a MEDINFO.

3.2 Hospital Statistics for Population Based Health Care in Epidemiology, Brussels (Belgium), September 1981: This conference was held under the sponsorship of the Commission of the European Economic Communities, Office of the World Health Organization for Europe, the Hospital Cormittee of the EEC, as well as IMIA. The recommendations from this conference were the result of a sustained effort that started in 1974 with the concept of the minimum basic data set. The report on this minimum basic data set for hospital statistics in the EEC is available at the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

3.3 Computer Technology Impact on Drug Information, Uppsala (Sweden), October 1981: This conference was a follow-up to a successful conference held on the same topic in Berne in 1978. Part of the Uppsala conference dealt with on-line communications between computers in many different locations around the world. Because of the success of this venture, it was decided that on-line facilities for presentation of posters and exchange of information should also be utilized in future conferences as it has proved to be a very efficient tool.

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3.4 Use of Computers in Aiding the Disabled, Haifa (Israel), November, 1981: This Working Conference was held on the occasion of the United Nations' Year of the Disabled. This, again, was a most successful conference, dealing with motor disabilities, hearing impairment and visual disabilities. From this conference, there was a general consensus that IMIA should consider forming a special interest group in the area of disabilities.

3.5 1982 Five Working Conferences have been, or will be, completed by the time of the IFIP General Assembly. These are as follows:

3.5.1 World Congress on Health Informatics and Developing Countries Mexico City (Mexico), February 8-12, 1982: Approximately 400 participants from 35 countries discussed and analysed the problems and perspectives of the application of health informatics in developing countries. About fifty invited papers were delivered, supplemented by 88 free communications, mainly from Latin-American countries. This was the first IMIA effort in exploration of the application of informatics in developing countries. Participants felt it was very useful and it was decided that follow-up conferences should be held on specific topics and that IMIA, in cooperation with WHO, would determine the location and date of the next meeting.

3.5.2 European Federation for Medical Informatics (EFMI), Dublin (Ireland), March 21, 1982: Like the Toulouse conference of the previous year, the Dublin conference was both a scientific and financial success. These conferences are very well attended (up to 1,000 participants) and are highly regarded for their scientific content.

3.5.3 Communications Networks in Health Care, Stockholm (Sweden), June 14-18, 1982: This was well attended and proved to be both an efficient, well-run conference and a productive and scientific, credible success.

3.5.4 Data Protection and Health Information Systems is the third Working Conference of W.G.4 and will be held in Kiel, F.R.G., September 7-10, 1982.

3.5.5 Nursing Informatics, being organized with the United Kingdom Department of Health, will be held in Harrogate, U.K., September 12-18, 1982.

3.6 1983 Because this is a MEDINFO year, the major emphasis will be placed on the MEDINFO 83 conference, to be held in Amsterdam, August 22-27, 1983. Because of this, there will be no separate European Federation meeting that year, but this will be held in conjunction with MEDINFO 83. The only other Working Conference that year will be held in Chamonix (France) on the subject of Education in Medical Informatics, March 21-25, 1983.

3.7 1984 In 1984, three conferences are proposed. These are as follows.

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3.7.1 Health Informatics and Coding/Classification Systems: This will be scheduled for Ottawa, Canada in the spring (March/April) 1984.

3.7.2 Assessment of Technology has been proposed for San Francisco, U.S.A., but a date has not been finalized.

3.7.3 A conference on Computers to Evaluate Health Services has been proposed for Dresden, DDR, but no date has been finalized.

#### 4.0 IMIA Administrative Meetings

4.1 IMIA has held its Borad Meeting in Srinigar, India in April 1982 at the invitation of the Computer Society of India. A seminar on health informatics was held in Srinigar, Kashmir, in conjunction with the Delhi Chapter of the Computer Society of India. Approximately 100 people attended this seminar. It was clear from the seminar that the demand for health informatics in India is rapidly growing.

4.2 The next meeting of IMIA will be the General Assembly, scheduled for Melbourne, 28-29 September, 1982. This is at the invitation of the Australian Computer Society. An international seminar on health informatics has been organized in Melbourne, at which several IMIA members have been invited to give presentations.

4.3 The next Board Meeting of IMIA is proposed for Prague, Czechoslovakia, during the last week of March, 1983. As is IMIA's policy, the 1983 meeting of the IMIA General Assembly will be at the time of the MEDINFO 83 conference in Amsterdam in August, 1983.

5.0 IMIA Publications The IMIA Publications Committee is chaired by Professor Reichertz, who is also a member of the IFIP Publications Committee under the Chairmanship of Professor Zemanek. IMIA benefits from this arrangement as exemplified by a recent miscommunication with North-Holland being corrected through this arrangement. In addition, IMIA is hoping that one of its publications (Health Informatics in Developing Countries) will be translated into Spanish through the auspices of the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) and distributed in Latin American countries. It is also hoped that we can explore our contractual arrangement with North-Holland, such that after one year following a North-Holland publication the Working Conferences could be reprinted and/or translated through an alternative publisher.

6.0 Funding for International Development IMIA has attempted on several occasions to obtain funding through ICD and ICIL without success. It is hoped that IFIP will support the application of IMIA to obtain funding in the order of 5,000 S.F. for the initial establishment of a Latin American Region in Mexico City.

7.0 International Relationships International relationships continue to improve with a number of organizations.

7.1 World Health Organization (WHO) WHO has agreed to sponsor IMIA and this was done at an early date that had major effects on countries wishing to participate in IMIA. IMIA is grateful to the IFIP President and to Dr. Mandil for assisting in this matter. IMIA has also developed good relations with the WHO Office of the Americas (PAHO) and is hoping to maintain communications with Latin American contacts through this office.

7.2 Intergovernmental bureau for Informatics (IBI) Contacts with IBI have been made, both at the IFIP meeting in Dublin, as well as during the IMIA meeting in Florence and in Mexico. IBI appears to be most interested in cooperating with IMIA in development of health informatics in Africa and continuing communications are proceeding.

7.3 World Medical Association (WMA) Dr. Schlogell is continuing to represent the WMA at IMIA meetings and relations with this organization remain good.

7.4 Council for International Organizations of Medical Science (CIOMS) IMIA is a member of CIOMS and uses CIOMS to publicize its activities. IMIA is also able to relate to many of these other scientific organizations through the auspices of CIOMS.

7.5 Approaches have been made to the International Hospital Association for bilateral affiliation, following interest expressed at the European regional meeting in Dublin.

## 8.0 MEDINFO

8.1 MEDINFO 83 is progressing very well and the Program Committee has met twice with a well-represented, international selection of session chairmen and participants. About 450 intents-to-submit papers, posters, etc., have been received 16 months prior to the conference date. The next meeting of the Program Committee, Steering Committee and Organizing Committee will be in Amsterdam during the third week of March, 1983.

8.2 MEDINFO 86 The IMIA General Assembly in Melbourne will hear a proposal to hold MEDINFO 86 in the United States.

9.0 By-Laws Revision The revised by-laws were approved by the IMIA Board at its meeting in Srinagar and have been distributed to members. In addition, we have sought the advice of Professor Lehmann, albeit rather late and regret that we could not get his advice because of our own miscommunication prior to this date. The IMIA membership will be voting on these by-laws at the General Assembly in Melbourne.

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10.0 National Membership There are currently 26 member countries which have applied to be recognized by IMIA as national society members and 8 outstanding TC4-IMIA transition members. These transition members will be reviewed at the next meeting of the IMIA General Assembly, for extension where appropriate. During the Mexico World Congress on Informatics and Developing Countries, a meeting took place between a number of Latin American countries' representatives. The conclusion of this meeting was the signing of the Acuerdo de Mexico, by Argentina, Brasil, Columbia, Cuba, Haiti, Mexico and Nicaragua, which represented a major step forward for IMIA's improving relations with these countries. The Acuerdo proposed cooperation between these countries, a Latin-American region of IMIA and the formation of a federation of health informatics societies of Latin America. It is anticipated, therefore, that with transition members becoming full members of IMIA and the Federation of Latin-American societies joining IMIA, that IMIA will have over 40 national society members by the time of the General Assembly meeting in Amsterdam in 1983.

11.0 Finances IMIA has reviewed its financial position and attempted to curb its losses, in terms of grants to conferences by converting these to loans, developing the principle of self-supporting conferences with profits going to IMIA's revenue and by sharing conference costs and administrative costs with regional groups. It is also hoped that MEDINFO 83 will be a resounding financial success, beyond the projected 60,000 S.F.. A projected three-year budget (82-84) is attached to this report.

12.0 Conclusion I wish to thank the IFIP General Assembly, and particularly the IFIP Council and its offices, for their help and support of IMIA over the past year. I would also like to especially thank Mr. Jim Finch, the Cognizant Officer for IMIA, for his continued encouragement and support.

All of the above respectfully submitted,



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President, IMIA