

## **IMIA - strategic outlook**

During the Board meeting in Mexico in spring 1995 an extensive brainstorming and discussion was performed to identify appropriate changes within IMIA to increase support and services for its national and institutional members as well as for its working groups and its special interest groups. The discussions went over several days, reflected all strategic papers, reports, and budgetary figures of the last years and analyzed developments in the vastly growing health informatics world. Besides many less important aspects, which will directly flow into the work of individual members of the board, some general statements could be derived from a kind of cybernetic model which was put together to understand the performance of our international organization.

Participating in the discussions were M. Ball, S. Kaihara, A. Espinosa, J. Douglas, J.-R. Scherrer, B. Solheim, K. Hannah, H. Peterson, J. van Bommel and O. Rienhoff. The key results can be summarized as follows:

1. The further development of our growing organization depends clearly on the establishment of a secretarial service for the working groups, the member countries and the board. Because of the limited financial situation the secretarial service has to be financially limited in the first years. It then depends on the money raised through the additional activities promoted by the secretarial services.
2. MEDINFO is still a key success factor for all member countries and all activities within IMIA. More and more requests for MEDINFOS and the necessity to service a growing number of colleagues internationally and within the IMIA regions make it necessary to have MEDINFOS every two years. Modern MEDINFOS should reflect the changes in the environment and should consist of three equally important parts: Conference, industrial exhibition, and workshops which are organized by the various groups on national, regional, and international level, and for which MEDINFO provides a platform. Within the conference and all other activities of IMIA a clear distinction between scientific and professional activities has to be maintained so to service the two different member communities within IMIA's international family.

3. It is of key interest to all member societies and the international organization to invite as many young individuals as possible into the international scientific and professional exchange of IMIA. More of these young individuals should be encouraged to form working groups, to join into the SIGs, and to participate in various other activities of IMIA so that IMIA becomes a much more vivid international community .

In order to keep track with all activities and to form a transparent IMIA for all member societies an electronic information system has to be built up which also serves as a bulletin board for outside individuals, member societies and international organizations to find out about health informatics activities within IMIA.

4. Because of the long-term support of individuals who have been working within IMIA the international organization contains a fair amount of highly knowledgeable individuals in all fields of health informatics. This "knowledge base" shall be used to offer specialized workshops and advisory meetings to national member societies, institutional members and others for mutual benefit. These services also depend on the establishment of a secretarial basement for IMIA.

5. IMIA has been very successful in recent years and has grown considerably. With its new internal structure it has established the basis for further growth and more services for the various member categories. In the years to come this framework has to be filled with more liveliness, more transparency, and more active young individuals supported by a knowledgeable secretariat which keeps track and maintains the existing IMIA culture.