Medical Informatics

IMIA

Newsletter

A Publication of IMIA (International Medical Informatics Association)

Message from the President
IMIA - Current Status and Future Developments

To serve the international community of Health Informatics professionals and scientists worldwide, the International Medical Informatics Association (IMIA) has undergone a major infrastructural development program in recent years. At the end of the sixties, when IMIA was born out of the International Federation of Information Processing (IFIP) it has been organizing its successful work on a primarily voluntary basis with a traditional paper and pencil infrastructure. A continuously positive development led to currently more than 40 National Member Societies and a similar number of Institutional and Corresponding Members.

IMIA became the only true international organization in the scientific and professional field of Health Informatics. With its growing importance it was realized that a new organizational infrastructure has to be built up to sufficiently service its member societies. In addition, the number of individual young scientists and relevant academic institutions and companies that wanted to cooperate directly with IMIA grew continuously.

Consequently, IMIA changed its statutes and standing orders to adapt to the new needs. In addition, IMIA built up a new electronic infrastructure in the last year. The key components of the electronic infrastructure will be an Intranet for all specialists and scientists cooperating within IMIA. The Intranet will not only be used to manage the organization but also to discuss professional and scientific developments internally. This structure will further advance the leading edge work of IMIA's international Working Groups and Special Interest Groups.

In addition, the IMIA Newsletter has been made available as electronic version and globally offers information and links to relevant Web servers in the field of Health Informatics. This part of the new infrastructure is open to all professionals in the field. Key information will be available in key languages of the various regions of IMIA to allow easy access and surfing for all health professionals.

In addition to the new electronic infrastructure, IMIA will continue to publish its print media: its Working Conference Proceedings, its MEDINFO Proceedings, the IMIA Yearbook, which gives an update on all relevant internationally published articles in the field and contains IMIA's "Yellow Pages", and the IMIA Newsletter, which keeps health professionals informed who are not yet linked to the Internet.

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Message from the President - cont.

The International Medical Informatics Association has recently launched a new African Region because more and more professionals in the African continent are using Health Informatics in health care. During the Second Conference on Health Informatics in South Africa (HELINA Coordinator: Dr Sedick Isaacs, email: misi@gshosp.wcape.gov.za) in April 1996, representatives of nearly 20 countries expressed high interest in becoming members of the International Medical Informatics Association.

Also, more organizations and countries are knocking at IMIA's door in the Latin-American Region (IMIA-LAC President: Dr Amado Espinosa, email: aelr@uagunix.gdl.uag.mx) and the Asian and Western Pacific Region (APAMI President: Prof K.C. Lun, email: coflunc@nus.sg). In addition, Chief Information Officers of multi-national commercial companies have a continuing interest in building up personal links with key professional and academic figures in the field, which is made possible through IMIA's Industrial Institutional Membership. In addition, various leading universities wish to have direct access to the international level which IMIA has been supporting by establishing an Academic Institutional Membership with reduced rates.

If one analyses IMIA's impact factor one can say that all relevant scientific and professional societies of Health/Medical Informatics worldwide are part of the IMIA family. In addition, through various forms of Institutional Membership, Chief Executives of the academic and the industrial sector find an exchange platform within IMIA which provides them with up-to-date information on leading edge developments globally.

The growing importance of IMIA is reflected by the close cooperation with the G7 countries' sub-project health care. IMIA has built up close links with the Health Telematics program of the European Union through its European regional group (EFMI, President: Prof Jean-Raoul Scherrer, email: jrs@diogenes.hcuge.ch; Liaison Officer: John Bryant, email: jbryant@bournemouth.ac.uk) and maintains traditionally close links to the most important international organization for Health Information: the National Library of Medicine in Washington (Director: Prof D.A.B. Lindberg, email: lindberg@nlm.nih.gov).

Regarding member statistics one could summarize that about 100 international experts are the key figures within IMIA. They represent more than 10,000 individual members of national societies. In 1995, the IMIA family met on a global scale at MEDINFO '95 in Vancouver, Canada. With about 4,000 participants and a big industrial exhibition it became a symbol for the thriving success of the international family.

Successful HELINA '96 Meeting in South Africa

HELINA '96 was held in April 1996 in South Africa. The conference was titled "Informatics for Health in Africa". It was the second working conference on Health Informatics on the African continent held under the auspices of IMIA - the first conference was held in Ife-Ife, Nigeria in 1993. The meeting was preceded by an Autumn School which provided theoretical and practical overview in various fields of Health Informatics.

HELINA was in essence an investment aimed at the transformation of health systems, and hence improvement of health services to ordinary citizens. This sentiment was also conveyed in the message of welcome sent by president Nelson Mandela (see below).

The focus areas of the conference were as follows:

- African policies, perspectives and strategies as regards Health Informatics.
- Informatics in epidemiological surveillance.
- Decision support systems.
- Information storage and retrieval.
- National, regional and district health information systems.
- Informatics education.
- Hospital information systems.
- Clinical information systems.
- Primary health care information systems.
- Networking and communication.

The conference was hosted by the South African Medial Research Council (MRC), the South African Department of Health, the South African Medical Informatics Group and the World Health Organisation. HELINA was attended by 274 people and more than 60 participants were trained in the Autumn School. The information disseminated and discussions regarding all of the focus areas of the conference will certainly influence future Health Informatics activities in South Africa. As an outcome of the conference an African Region for Health Informatics was formally established under the umbrella of IMIA.

The next conference on Health Informatics in Africa will be in 1999.

Message of Welcome from President Nelson Mandela

I have noted that HELINA '96 continues the proud tradition of working conferences of the International Medical Informatics Association (IMIA), aimed at improving health services to ordinary citizens. This time, the spotlight falls on the role of health-related information in Africa: and I am confident that your conference will build on the successes of the HELINA '93 conference held in 1993 in Nigeria. (...) Good health is primary prerequisite for creating the environment necessary for prosperity and social well-being. Unfortunately, Africa still lags behind in this area, as in many others. While history has much to do with this, the time has come for us to take the cudgels, and ensure that the African renaissance becomes a living reality. In the area of health, reforms such as proper district health systems and community involvement will help guarantee the efficient utilization of the meagre resources at our disposal. Yet it is a fact of life, that the success in such areas will further underline the centrality of effective information flow.

African countries are in a fortunate position that we can benefit from the latest advances in information technology without having to go through costly research and development. But we are called upon to select appropriate technology and to develop applications which will address the continent's unique health needs.

The drive for improved communications in health will benefit communities in more ways than one. Among others, it will help link communities and make them an integral part of national decision-making; ensure that they access information that can contribute to improving their quality of life; and strengthen the infrastructure for distance education. (...) I wish you successful deliberations.
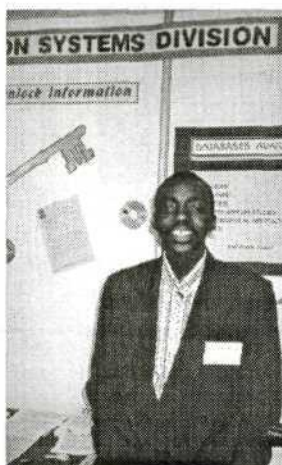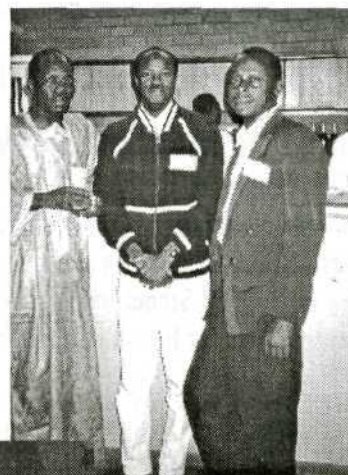
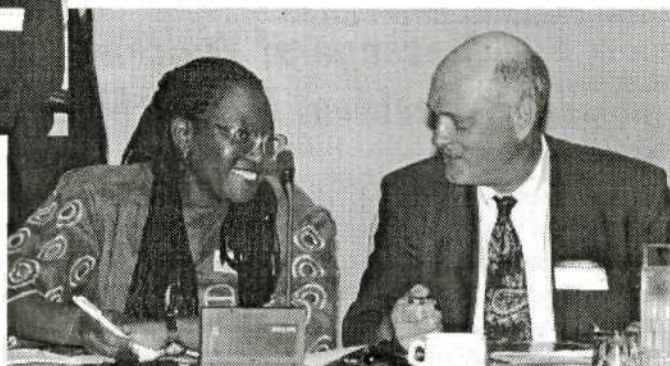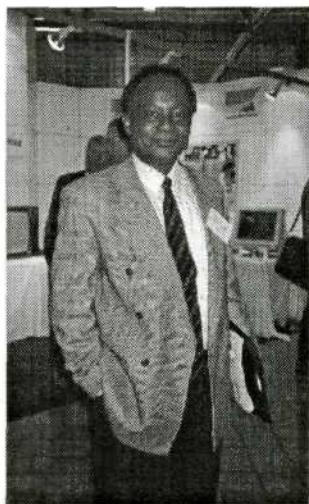*Nelson Mandela*
President Republic of South Africa

Snapshots from Helina 1996

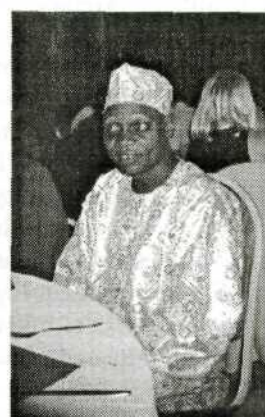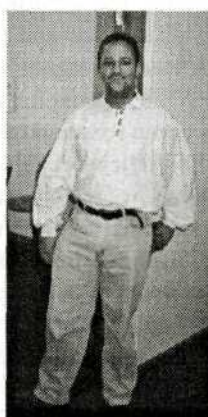Dr. Zuma, South African Min. of Health (above, mid.)

Dr. S. Isaacs, Coordinator IMIA African Region

The Organizing Team

O. Shinsana, Dir. Gen. South African Min. of Health and J.C. Healy, European Commission-DGXIII (above)

Coming Events

1st European Conference on Health Telematics Education

September 5-7, 1996
Corfu Island, Greece

The conference aims to bridge the gap between Health Telematics and Education and to provide an environment which fosters intellectual debate and social exchange. The conference is organised by the European Commission-DGXIII. The areas to be considered will be:

- Needs/current status in Health Telematics education in Europe
- Curriculum development in Health Telematics, Health Informatics and Nursing Informatics
- Development of courseware material, educational packages, software educational packages (CD-ROM, multimedia)
- Computer-based training, Computer-assisted learning
- Distance learning, WWW, and Internet applications
- Training in using Hospital Information Systems (HIS), Nursing Information Systems (NIS)
- Inter-University Programmes (Erasmus/Socrates)
- Accreditation of courses.

Contact

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nightingale/conferences.htm

14th International EuroPACS Meeting

October 3-5, 1996
Heraklion, Create, Hellas, Greece

EuroPACS'96 is the 14th in the series of international EuroPACS meetings. EuroPACS is a European association for the promotion of information exchange on Picture Archiving and Communication Systems (PACS).

The goal of the EuroPACS'96 meeting is to provide updated information on the state-of-the-art of PACS and related research activities.

The program will consist of both invited and submitted papers on new developments in this field, including clinical and technical. Arrangements are also currently being made for a commercial exhibition and a demonstration of DICOM implementations.

While remaining open to any issue related to image management and communication systems, the EuroPACS'96 meeting will focus primarily on the following topics:

- PACS and Image Management Architecures

- Medical Multimedia Workstations and Databases
- HIS-RIS-PACS Integration,
- Platforms and Methodologies
- Teleradiology
- Value Added PACS Services,
- Standardization
- Security and Legal Issues
- Clinical Applications and Evaluation
- Process Re-Engineering and Economic Issues.

The EuroPACS'96 meeting will take place at the Institute of Computer Science (ICS), Foundation for Research and Technology-Hellas (FORTH). ICS-FORTH is located at the Science and Technology Park of Crete, which is 5 km west of Heraklion, on the northern coast of the island of Crete.

The meeting will be held in an informal style and is intended for participants from academic, research, and medical institutions, as well as industry.

All papers from the meeting will be published in the EuroPACS '96 Proceedings.

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Coming Events

TELENURSE Conference

October 17-19, 1996
Athen, Greece

The first European TELNURSE Conference will focus on "Promoting the International Classification for Nursing Practice (ICNP) in Europe" and "Integrating Nursing Modules of Electronic Patient Records". The meeting is organised in cooperation with the European Commission-DGXIII.

Maintenance care and palliative care are major challenges to the European society. Care for the elderly, disabled and chronically ill relies mainly on nurses who account for close to 50% of salaries in hospital charges. But no systematized standardized data are available to describe and compare nursing care activity, quality and cost effectiveness in hospitals.
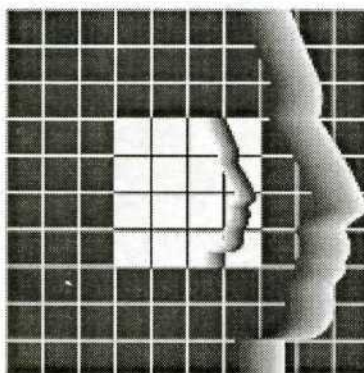
TELENURSE, as an accompanying measure of the Telematics Application Programme in the health care sector will start to fill up this gap by promoting the use of the emerging ICNP and an associated clinical nursing minimum data set (NMDS) in electronic patient care records.

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6th Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Medicine Europe

AIME '97

March 23-26, 1997
Grenoble, France

The European Society for Artificial Intelligence in Medicine (AIME) was established in 1986 after a successful workshop held in Pavia the year before.

The aims of AIME are the following: to foster fundamental and applied research in the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) techniques to medical care and medical research, and to provide a forum for reporting significant results achieved at biennial conferences. Previous meetings took place in Marseille (1987), London (1989), Maastricht (1991), Munich (1993) and Pavia (1995).

AIME wants to publish original contributions to the development of theory, techniques, and applications of AI in Medicine. Contributions to theory may include a presentation or an analysis of the properties of novel AI methodologies potentially useful to solve relevant medical problems. Papers on techniques should describe the development or the extension of AI methods and their implementation. Application papers should describe the implementation of AI systems to solve significant medical problems, and should present sufficient information to allow evaluation of the practical benefits of using the system.

The scope of AIME 97 includes the following methodological areas: Knowledge representation, acquisition; validation; Machine learning; Uncertain, temporal, case-based reasoning; Natural language understanding; KBS for image and signal interpretation; Monitoring and control; AI and telemedicine; Integration of KBS and patient medical record resource allocation; Planning and scheduling and other areas relevant to AI in Medicine.

Deadlines
September 15, 1996
  Receipt of papers for
  consideration
November 15, 1996
  Notification of acceptance
December 15, 1996
  Receipt of camera-ready
  papers

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http://www-timc.imag.fr/aime97

Coming Events

HC 97

March 17-19, 1997
Harrogate, Great Britain

The HC97 meeting is titled "Information-led healthcare: facing the clinical challenge". It is the largest healthcare information management conference in Europe. The sessions will cover all fields of Medical Informatics. Topics of the meeting will be: Administration, audit and quality assurance, coding and classification, community and mental health computing, data security and protection, departmental computer systems, education and training, expert systems, geographical information systems, health stategies, imaging, medical records, multimedia, networking, nursing informatics, primary care computing, procurement, public health and epidemiology information systems, telematics and world wide web technology. The HC97 conference is organised by The Bristish Computer Society Health Informatics Specialist Groups.

Deadline
September 1, 1996
   Submission of full papers

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MIE 97

May 24-29, 1997
Thessaloniki, Greece

MIE 97 is the 14th International Congress organised by the European Federation for Medical Informatics. It is titled "Health Care in the Information Highways". Topics will be:
- Health care information systems
- High performance computing and networking
- Telemedicine
- Security and integrity of medical data
- Health care services
- Biomedical signal and image processing
- Medical data bases
- Artificial intelligence in medicine
- Man-machine interfaces
- Evaluation and validation of health care systems
- Standardization in medical informatics

Deadlines
October 30, 1996
   Submission of papers
December 31, 1996
   Notification of acceptance
February 10, 1997
   Subm. of camera ready papers

Contact
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Triaena Congress
24 Har. Trikoupi street
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Health Cards '97

November 12-14, 1997
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Health Cards '97 will be the fourth International Congress on patient data cards in health care. Previous congresses took place in Barcelona (1991), Marseille (1993) and Frankfurt (1995).
Topics will be:
- State of the art in health cards around the world
- Demonstration and presentation of current projects, both on patient data and health professional cards
- Standardisation/ interoperability
- Applications of hybride techniques (smartcards, memory cards, optical cards, magstripe cards, barcode, ..)
- Privacy, security, legal aspects
- Cooperation with other sectors
- Quality of medical care
- Administration.

Parallel to the congress a major international exhibition will be organised.
Preceding HC '97 the Dutch National Chipcard Forum will have its fourth national congress on November 11, 1997.

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The New IMIA Newsletter Web-Service

During the last weeks the contents and layout of the IMIA Newsletter web server have been changed totally. At this site the Newsletter can be downloaded as electronic edition (see NL 20.1), and in addition up-to-date Information is available.

The Newsletter Web Service now contains pages with news from the Medical Informatics world including coming events and news from the Internet world comprising also links to Medical Informatics sites.

In the next weeks links to IMIA Working Group sites and to National Member Societies will be added to the pages.
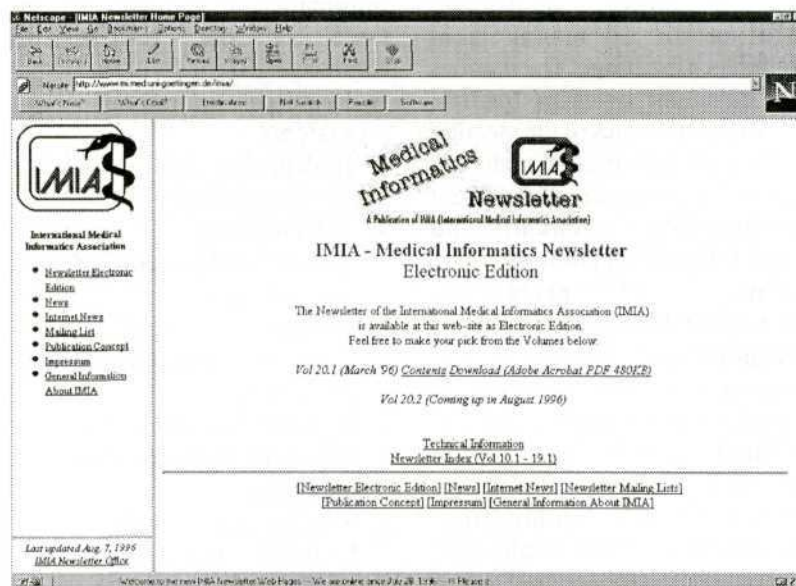
It is intended to add urther information to the Newsletter web site (e.g. IMIA reports) so that the site can become a marketplace for actual (non-commercial) news from the Medical Informatics world.

To keep the information up-to-date all users, congress organisers and working group chairmen are encouraged to send the latest information to the Newsletter Office (email: imianl@med.uni-goettingen.de).

Email become more important in the communication between IMIA members in the future. At the IMIA web site technical information etc. about email services and utility programs will be available.

The actual IMIA Newsletter pages have been set up making use of the HTML frame technology. Thus they can be best displayed applying the Netscape Navigator 2.02 (and higher) or the Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.0.

As screen resolution S-VGA or higher is recommended. Only a few graphics are implemented to keep download time short.

IMIA Newsletter Web-Service

http://www.mi.med.uni-goettingen.de/imia   email: imianl@med.uni-goettingen.de

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MEDINFO 98 News

For update information concerning the next MEDINFO meeting a web-server has been established It can be accessed through URL:
http://www.medinfo.or.kr.

IMIA Newsletter Vol. 20.2 Aug. 1996