



London General Assembly Meeting September 01, 2001

GA Agenda Item 03  
Board Agenda Item 05

## REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

*Jan H. van Bemmel*

This report covers both the period since the last GA meeting in Hannover, Germany, August 2000, and also summarizes the activities of the President over the past three years.

### **1. Some activities during the year 2000-2001**

#### *Preparation of the Spring Board meeting 2001*

Much effort was invested to have our Spring Board meeting in the Middle East. I had correspondence with Dr. Batami Sadan, IMIA's representative for Israel and with the Shimon Peres Center for Peace, to find out whether a medical/health informatics conference could be organized in Israel and its neighboring countries, at the same time as our IMIA Spring Board meeting in the Middle East. Contacts were made with representatives of Ministries in Egypt and Jordan to find out whether a combined meeting was feasible. In spite of all our intentions and favorable answers from the authorities in all three countries, it appeared regretfully not possible to have our Board meeting in Tel Aviv or Amman, because of the political developments in the Middle East. Therefore, after contacting our Spanish colleagues in Barcelona and Madrid, and in agreement with the Board and IMIA's Director, the Spring Board meeting was organized in Madrid on March 30 and 31, 2001. We are very indebted to the very efficient and constructive help of our Spanish member society.

#### *IMIA 2001 Satellite meeting on Challenges in Medical and Health Informatics*

The president organized, together with Mark Musen of Stanford University, an IMIA satellite meeting on *Challenges in Medical and Health Informatics*, at the time of the 2001 Spring Board meeting. This satellite meeting was held in Madrid, preceding the Board meeting. The outcomes of this satellite meeting will be presented at MEDINFO 2001 in London and published in one of the forthcoming issues of *Methods of Information in Medicine*. Steven Huesing and Carmen Ceinos, together with Désirée de Jong in Rotterdam, gave an immense organizational assistance, both to the organization of the Madrid Board meeting and the Satellite Conference.

### **2. Presentation at international conferences during 1998-2001**

The President was present at the following conferences and meetings, also representing IMIA:



- Invited lecture at HIMMS, February 24, 1999, Atlanta, USA
- Keynote lecture at the Annual conference on Health Informatics, March 24, 1999, Harrogate, UK
- Several lectures at the Congress on electronic patient records, March 29, 1999, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Keynote at COACH conference, April 20, 1999, Vancouver, Canada
- Invited lecture at G7/8 Conference on telecommunication in health care, April 30, 1999, Washington DC, USA
- Invited lecture at International Telemedicine conference, June 7, 1999, Jerusalem, Israel
- Keynote lecture at MIE 1999 conference, August 26, 1999, Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Lecture at Opening Ceremony of the International Nursing Conference in Auckland, April 30, 2000, Auckland, New Zealand
- Invited lecture at the Swedish Annual Conference on Medical Informatics, May 27-30, 2000, Stockholm, Sweden.
- Chairing the IMIA e-conference on *Empowerment of Patients for Better Health Care*, MIE 2000, August 28 2000, Hannover, Germany.
- Keynote at the Annual Conference of the Swiss Society for Medical Informatics, September 22 2000, Berne, Switzerland.
- Keynote lecture at the Conference on Bioengineering and Medical Informatics, May 4, 2001, Belfast, Northern Ireland
- Invited lecture at the Annual Conference of the Spanish member society, March 30, 2001, Madrid, Spain
- On a few occasions during the Fall of 2000 and the Spring of 2001, together with Reinhold Haux, I gave advice on how to establish a new University for Medical Informatics in Innsbruck, Austria

### 3. Key issues during 1998-2001

Many of the other issues that I considered important during my presidency have been taken care of in close collaboration with the Executive Director and several Board members, such as:

#### 1. *Strengthening IMIA as professional organization*

This has certainly been partly realized, primarily because of the activities by IMIA's Executive Director, Steven Huesing. This does not imply that IMIA is already a full-blown professional society. This goal is perhaps still far away, as long as IMIA remains to be an association of societies, and has no individual members. Nevertheless, very valuable first steps were made already at the end of Otto Rienhoff's presidency, and continued and widened during the last three years, such as IMIA's database and website and its expanding membership.

On the initiative of Marion Ball, the President had several discussions during 1999 with representatives of IBM on the possibility that IBM would support the establishment of electronic services of IMIA, including an electronic Professional Resource Index. This did not lead to a concrete support by IBM.

#### 2. *Building bridges to other organizations*

As will appear from the reports of the VP for membership and the VP for working groups and special interest groups, the ties with several organizations have been strengthened during the past years. Discussions on collaboration were started and/or continued with:

- The International Federation for Medical and Biological Engineering
- The International Federation of Health Record Organizations



- The Society for The Internet and Medicine
- The International Society of Telemedicine
- WONCA

In collaboration with the Executive Director, a host of new institutional members could be welcomed to IMIA at the past General Assembly meetings. The President has prepared a list of potential academic and corporate institutional members. This list has been discussed at the Auckland Board meeting with the intention that the VP for membership will take action.

### 3. *Tapping the experience of former officers and honorary members*

The former officers and honorary members serve IMIA as follows:

- reflection on plans of IMIA's Board
- come forward with plans on long-range planning
- relate to the Board through a representative, who is also the advisor to the President. Dr. Don A.B. Lindberg, Director NLM, Bethesda MD, USA, fulfilled this function during the past years
- give advice on a model for accreditation of persons/institutions by IMIA
- reflect on the suggestion of establishing "friends of IMIA"

The last issue has not yet been realized as we intended. It needs further attention in the coming years.

### 4. *Making IMIA better visible to the outside world*

- During several years, the electronic services of IMIA were carried out very well by Thomas Kleinoeder in Göttingen.
- The new web site and the growing corporate and academic membership are proof that the visibility of IMIA has increased. This is the case – as said – because of the fact that the Executive Director was able to deploy activities directed toward the outside world.
- The production of the IMIA Yearbooks was transferred in August 2000 to Reinhold Haux and Casimir Kulikowski as the new Yearbook editors.
- The President had, together with the successive VPs for Services, Alexa McCray and Reinhold Haux, several meetings with representatives from Publishers (such as Kluwer and IOS Press). It was decided that IOS Press would become the preferred publisher for MEDINFOs. IOS Press expressed interest to compile an historic overview of IMIA publications on a CD-ROM.
- The Executive Director took the initiative to make an agreement with the journal *Health Informatics* on a regular presentation of IMIA in their periodicals.

### 5. *Make future MEDINFOs still better and MEDIFO 2001 the largest ever*

There is no reason to doubt that MEDINFO 2001 will not be the best Medical Informatics World Conference ever. Nevertheless, there are some signs that IMIA could still further improve the organization of its future World Conferences. This needs to be discussed in view of point 1: strengthening IMIA as a professional organization.

## 4. Closing remarks

I had the privilege to have been involved in IMIA from the very early onset (when it was still the Special Interest Group TC4 of IFIP). My activities involved, for instance:

- serving TC4 and IMIA as Board member, as VP for Services for a series of years, and as President during the past three years,



- organization of several IMIA Working Conferences, resulting in the publication of several IMIA books and special journal issues,
- participation in the SPCs of almost all MEDINFOs, including editing the MEDINFO 83 Amsterdam Proceedings and chairing the SPC of MEDINFO 86 in Washington,
- chief-editing the IMIA Yearbooks from 1992 to 2000.

During the years that I served IMIA I have also lost some very close friends of whom I want to mention in particular Jos Willems and Peter Reichertz. I miss them dearly.

Time has come now to transfer the gavel with great gratitude and happiness to the most capable successor I can think of, my friend K.C. Lun. Time has also come to continue serving IMIA, but from a different position: that of past president. I would like to thank all my dear friends and colleagues in IMIA for their continuous support and friendship. I wish IMIA a great future with lots of creative and bright ideas.

Jan H. van Bommel  
President of IMIA