Welcome to IMIA!

General

The International Medical Informatics Association is an independent organization established under Swiss law in 1989. IMIA was originally established in 1967 as Technical Committee 4 of the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP — www.ifip.org). In 1979, it evolved from a Special Interest Group of IFIP to its current status as a fully independent organization. IMIA continues to maintain its relationship with IFIP as an affiliate organization. IMIA also has close ties with the World Health Organization (WHO — www.who.int) as a NGO (Non Government Organization), and with the International Federation of Health Information Management (IFHIMA). IMIA is also a Liaison A category organisation in cooperation with ISO (ISO liaison).

The working language of IMIA is English.

Purpose, Goals, Objectives

IMIA plays a major global role in the application of information science and technology in the fields of healthcare and research in medical, health and bio-informatics. The basic goals and objectives of the association are to:
• promote informatics in health care and research in health, bio and medical informatics.
• advance and nurture international cooperation.
• to stimulate research, development and routine application.
• move informatics from theory into practice in a full range of health delivery settings, from physician's office to acute and long term care.
• further the dissemination and exchange of knowledge, information and technology.
• promote education and responsible behaviour.
• represent the medical and health informatics field with the World Health Organization and other international professional and governmental organizations.

In its function as a bridge organization, IMIA's goals are:
• moving theory into practice by linking academic and research informaticians with care givers, consultants, vendors, and vendor-based researchers.
• leading the international medical and health informatics communities throughout the 21st century.
• promoting the cross-fertilization of health informatics information and knowledge across professional and geographical boundaries.
• serving as the catalyst for ubiquitous worldwide health information infrastructures for patient care and health research.

Membership

As an 'association of associations' bridging the world of health and biomedical informatics, IMIA membership consists primarily of Member Societies, Institutional (Academic and Corporate) and Affiliate Members, and Honorary Fellows.

Member Societies: In each country, one society or a group of societies or an appropriate body which is representative of activities within the field of medical informatics may become a Member Society. Only one Member Society may be admitted from each country, except as defined in IMIA Policies by the General Assembly of IMIA from time to time. Multiple Member Societies may be admitted from one country if, and only if, a] agreement on a single Member Society has not proved possible, and b] the arrangement is approved by a two-thirds majority of IMIA's Member Societies. Each Member Society shall appoint one representative to IMIA.

In an country where no representative societies exist, IMIA accommodates involvement through «Corresponding» members, especially within developing countries.

IMIA Member Societies may organize into regional groups. IMIA now has regions that cover the whole of the globe: Latin America and the Caribbean (IMIA-LAC), Europe (EFMI), Asia/Pacific (APAMI), Africa (HELINA), North America. and, most recently, Middle East Association (MEAHI).

Institutional Members: there are two categories, corporate and academic members. Corporate members include vendor, consulting, and technology firms as well as national professional organizations. Academic members include universities, medical centres, research centres and like institutions.

Affiliate Members: international organizations that share an interest in the broad field of health and biomedical informatics.

Honorary Fellows: these are individuals who have demonstrated exceptional merit in furthering the aims and interests of IMIA; Fellowship is conferred for life.

Governance

IMIA is governed by its General Assembly, which comprises one representative from each IMIA Member, Honorary Fellows, Chairs of IMIA's Working and Special Interest Groups and a representative from IFIP, the World Health Organization, and each of IMIA's Regions. Only IMIA Member Societies have full voting rights. The General Assembly meets annually; it meets at Medinfo in the years that a Medinfo event is held, and general at other major events in non-Medinfo years.

The Board of IMIA, elected by the General Assembly, conducts the association's affairs. The day-to-day operations are supported by the association's CEO and office, who are also responsible for IMIA's electronic services.

The officers of the Board and IMIA's vice presidents vigorously pursue IMIA's mission to:

• Monitor the range of special interest areas and focus support on new developments.
• Capitalize on the synergies and collective resources of IMIA's constituents.
• Minimize fragmentation between scientific and professional medical informaticians.
• Ensure successful adaptation to changes in the medical informatics marketplace and discipline.
• Raise the profile and awareness of IMIA within and outside of the IMIA organization.
• Encourage cooperation between the scientific and commercial health informatics communities.
• Equitably balance support to emerging and existing IMIA members.
• Establish and maintain cooperation and harmony with organizations that emerge to address medical informatics issues.
• Continue to position IMIA as the gatekeeper for medical informatics issues in the international community

Activities

MedInfo

IMIA organises the internationally acclaimed triennial «World Congress on Medical and Health Informatics» — commonly know as MedInfo. The event provides both a high quality scientific exchange of current research and thinking in health and biomedical informatics and an opportunity for formal meetings and informal networking of IMIA's members. The event is jointly hosted by IMIA and one of its Member Societies. The selection of the host society is determined through a vote of the IMIA General Assembly.

The next MedInfo will be held in Copenhagen, Denmark in August 2013, with the Danish Society of Medical Informatics providing the local organisation of the event and the MedInfo2013 Scientific Programme Committee being responsible for the scientific content.

Working and Special Interest Groups

The IMIA family includes a growing number of Working and Special Interest Groups, which consist of individuals who share common interests in a particular focal field. The groups provide opportunities for collaboration among individuals who share common interests in a particular focal field. The Nursing Informatics Special Interest Group (IMIA-NI) hold a triennial congress (the next will be NI2012 in Montreal, Canada), and other groups hold working conferences on leading edge and timely health, medical and bio-medical informatics issues. Current and future activities of the Working and Special Interest Groups are posted on the IMIA website and a summary is included in the IMIA Yearbook.

Other Initiatives

Following almost five years of work by the Strategic Planning Taskforce, initiated and lead by Dr. Nancy Lorenzi, IMIA Past President, IMIA's Strategic Plan, 'Towards IMIA 2015', was unanimously approved by the IMIA General Assembly at its meeting at MedInfo2007 in Brisbane, Australia in August, 2007 (and in conjunction with IMIA's 40th birthday). The Strategic Plan, and its associated Transition Plan will provide roadmaps for IMIA's future development.

IMIA continues to develop its communication capabilities through its website, which is undergoing expansion and development, and contains profiles on its members, working groups and activities. IMIA is constantly striving to further the services it provides to its members and the informatics community in general by promoting free interaction among and between its member network and the bio-medical and health informatics community at large. Through input from the IMIA Web 2.0 Exploratory taskforce (now the IMIA Social Media Working Group), further modes of interaction with and between IMIA members and the wider global health and biomedical informatics communities are being developed.

Schattauer GmbH's *Methods of Information in Medicine* and Elsevier Science's *International Journal of Medical Informatics* have been accorded the status of «an Official Journal of the International Medical Informatics Association» since 2003.

These initiatives are completely aligned with the Strategic Plan and the philosophical personal vision of IMIA's Past President, Prof. Dr. Reinhold Haux who took on the difficult task of overseeing the implementation and execution of the Plan and to foster his personal vision:

«That IMIA provides a model example for successful, tolerant and peaceful collaboration of individuals, beyond any nations and cultures, for the sake of health and quality of life of the people in our world».