Introduction to the Global Health IT Strategies and Applications Minitrack

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The global proliferation of information and communication technologies, along with improved mobile computing accessibility, enhanced security and cloud-based data exchanges have germinated interests in those seeking to apply existing and emerging information technologies to address health issues throughout diverse regions of the world. These applications and solutions can vary widely depending on the resources; infrastructure and culture inherent to regions. These include global health education systems, emerging low-cost mobile health apps for all healthcare actors, public health monitoring and tracking systems, emergency response systems, as well as traditional telemedicine applications. These efforts are already impacting the rapid growth and further development of global healthcare solutions and applications arising from the active collaboration among cross-disciplinary researchers, multi-national agencies and international clinical practitioners.

This minitrack will examine similarities and differences in how regions as diverse as North America, Africa, Asia and the Middle-East apply technology for improving health and healthcare systems. The focus will be on emerging trends for applying innovative health IT solutions to improve general population and community health care across the globe, including low-cost, mobile and other emerging health technological applications. These solutions will provide a multinational perspective on the benefits of mobile health and other emerging information technologies and describes different examples and applications implemented.

Global health strategy and applications relate to an emerging trend for applying innovative health IT solutions to improve population health and community health care across the globe, emphasizing low-cost, mobile and other emerging health technological applications. These solutions will provide a multinational perspective on the benefits of mobile health and other emerging information technologies and describes different examples and applications implemented.

As this minitrack addresses the role of technology in the emerging trend of applying healthcare globally, much of this inaugural session will focus on giving direction for future researchers in the field. As such, the minitrack will feature a workshop, titled “Global Health Information Technologies: Setting a Research Agenda for Issues, Innovations, and Strategies”. The goal of this workshop is to provide attendants with an overview of the emerging topic of applying information technology to global health issues, and to construct a research agenda to guide future research in this area. This workshop focuses on various topics at the international level, emphasizing how existing and emerging information technologies can be employed to address health issues throughout diverse regions of the world. To encourage and direct future research in this area, an outcome of this workshop will be a collaborative research agenda for Global Health IT. The intended audience includes healthcare practitioners and technologists interested in addressing these transnational health issues, and fostering collaboration among various transnational and multidisciplinary agents in doing so.

As well, the minitrack will include one paper session, containing two papers. The first paper, titled “Medical Document Classification Based on MeSH”, showcases an application used to extract text and classify medical documents, as well as discusses its implications and applications in a global health context. The second paper, titled “Mobile Personal Health Records: Research Agenda for Applications in Global Health”, gives direction for researchers in applying this patient-centric subset of health information technology to global health issues.

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