Introduction to the Global Health IT Strategies Minitrack

Joseph Tan
McMaster University
tanjosep@mcmaster.ca

Michael S. Dohan
Lakehead University
msdohan@lakeheadu.ca

Nilmini Wickramasinghe
RMIT University
nilmini.work@gmail.com

The global proliferation of information and communication technologies, mobile computing, 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 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 mini-track will examine broader issues relating to Global Health IT strategies, including similarities and differences in how regions as diverse as North America, Africa, Asia and the Middle-East approach to health improvements, emerging trends for applying innovative health IT solutions to improve general population and community health care globally, new forms and modalities of care delivery aided with Health IT globally such as use of innovative low-cost, mobile and sensor-enabled 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 IT Strategies relate to all forms of emerging trends for applying innovative health IT solutions globally such as to improve population health and community health care, as well as harm reduction.

For example, certain health conditions may not be improved, and even if they can, certain e-solutions can focus on harm reduction while not improving health (e.g., social support groups on facebook). E-solutions emphasizing low-cost, mobile and sensor-enabled or other new health technological applications and new ways of delivering traditional, complementary and integrative medicine will be accommodated in this mini-track. All of these ehealth solutions will provide a multinational perspective on the benefits of mobile health and other emerging information technologies and describes different examples and applications implemented.

This minitrack includes a total of three papers, each with their own unique application of IT for Global Health purposes. “Value-Mapping IT Platform Options in Global Health: A Multi-Year Case of Code Rot versus the Event-Driven Outbreak Economy” presents a global public health organization’s efforts at innovation enabled by investments into an open source online IT platform. “Vis-Health: Exploratory Analysis and Visualization of Dengue Cases in Brazil”, presents and validates a tool, Vis-Health, for analysis and visualization of public health data covariance with variables chosen by the user, in order to elicit clues for a better understanding of disease occurrences. In “The Role of Social Networking in Healthcare”, the global health applications of social media, their different user groups, and their future opportunities will be presented.

Many thanks to William Chismar and Tom Horan for their effort in managing this minitrack.