Over the last decade "user friendliness" of elegantly designed computer applications has become an issue of growing concern to hospital administrators, clinicians and other users and system developers. The initial response of systems developers to this concern was to introduce systems that appeared prima facie to be elegant, and which allowed clinic administrative personnel easier access to the power of automation. In spite of these many advances toward user friendly automated systems, however, their utilization/acceptance is apparently not based solely on the merits or ease of use of the applications themselves. A plethora of social, educational, personal and bureaucratic factors can intervene to impact the acceptance of a computer application.

The paper by Craig and Mehta examines user acceptance from the perspective of continuing compliance with a set of clinical prescribing guidelines being evaluated by an automated system. The study they will describe, though adopting a different methodology, extends the analyses performed by Laska, Siegel and Sipsong (1981) in their initial evaluation of the impact of this system on clinician prescribing behavior.

Alexander adopts a different perspective on user acceptance in her analysis of the impact of a computer system on clinician attitudes. Her study examines changes in clinician attitudes towards automation as a function of the implementation of an automated drug review system.

To Kaplan, views of automation expressed by physicians, programmers, medical computing researchers and project managers can serve as a Rorschach for their values and aspirations. Such values and aspirations can affect decisions concerning automation, use of data, project selection, design, implementation and evaluation, and, thus, user acceptance. This paper discusses the computer as Rorschach and its implications for project management. It describes different views of the computer with particular attention to how medical computer researchers have seen the computer, and their importance for project management decisions.

Conklin will discuss a variety of practical methods of insuring user acceptance of large-scale information systems at many levels in a large mental health/retardation system. He will describe efforts in the State of New York to insure continuing processing of a drug prescription recording and monitoring system, and to develop a network of system users from widely disparate professional backgrounds, continue professional education using outputs from the system, and insure quality care via formal and informal studies of clinician prescribing behavior.

Finally, the pages by Kjerulf, Counte, Salloway and Campbell examines user satisfaction with training received on a medical information system.(MIS) A variety of information gathered on users of an MIS prior to the introduction of the system was related to users perceptions of the training, and eventual satisfaction with the MIS. Personality attributes which impact the perception of training and use of the MIS will also be described.