What Medical Informaticians Do With and Think About an International Medical Informatics Listserv: Member Survey Preliminary Findings

Craig Kuziemsky[a], Martha B. Adams[b], Bonnie Kaplan[c], Kourosh Ravvaz[d], Ross Koppel[e]

[a] *Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON, Canada*
[b] *Division of General Internal Medicine, Department of Medicine; Division of Clinical Informatics, Department of Community and Family Medicine; Duke Center for Health Informatics, Duke University Medical Center, USA*
[c] *Yale Center for Medical Informatics at the Yale University School of Medicine; Yale Interdisciplinary Center for Bioethics; The Information Society Project at the Yale Law School, Yale University, USA*
[d] *Aurora Research Institute, Aurora Health Care, Milwaukee, WI, USA*
[e] *Sociology Department; Center for Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Medical School; LDI, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA*

Abstract

A survey of members of the American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA) listserv Forum on implementation and optimization asked how members perceived the Forum, and suggestions for improvement. Respondents appear to be remarkably engaged with the Forum's debates, information sharing, educational and practical teachings, comments, and immediacy.

Keywords:

Listserv; Informatics; Interaction; Sharing.

Introduction

In 2012, the American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA) created the "Implementation and Optimization Forum," (hereafter, the "Forum"). It quickly became a virtual meeting room for more than 1,200 medical informatics experts from all over the world. Discussions ranged from known implementation challenges to the current scientific literature. This poster extends our previous work on the types of content and discussions on the forum.[1]

Methods

We surveyed listserv members via SurveyMonkey to gain insight on their use of and perceptions about the listserv. We report preliminary results.

Results

Respondents appreciated the many insights posted on the listserv. Of N=173 respondents, 44% reported reading postings daily, 40% catch up on missed readings several times weekly, while 10% read the Forum at least weekly. Another question asked what attracts members to the forum. 172 respondents read it because they appreciate the interesting comments (66%), differing perspectives (63%), learning about important issues (61%), the range of experiences (58%), keeping abreast of developments (55%) and controversies (52%), and keeping connected. Respondents reflected on likes, dislikes, and suggestions for improvement (See Table 1).

Table 1– Sample comments about the forum

• What's so great is that the topics are spontaneous, and not the assignment of some publication/agency. Keep it up exactly as it is -- including the full thread of the conversation with each post (essential!). I must say that I'm surprised that there's not more controversy over the doom-and-gloom topics, but I'm also glad, because I usually agree completely with the savvy list pundits.

• It would be awesome to keep the topics more related to implementation, less in the "abstract" and more directly relevent to actual implementation logistics, costs, strategies etc.

• I thoroughly enjoy the listserv although some people do monopolize it occasionally.

• Would be great to make topics searchable if this list-serve were viewable elsewhere beyond the email stream. Inclusion of clinicians at key decision points in HIT design, implementation, AND POLICY/REGULATION. Addition of next/previous buttons to move directly back and forth between posts in a thread, although not attaching all the previous posts might make this unnecessary.

• I enjoy this listserv. In addition to the topics that are currently posted about most, which seem to be about system interoperability and safety and the lack thereof, I'd like it if more people felt comfortable posting about any informatics issue of potential interest. Let's encourage that.

Conclusion

The listserv offers a virtual global community that spans multiple disciplines and perspectives, and an underlying goal of improving healthcare IT. Respondents appear to be remarkably engaged and pleased with the Forum's debates, information sharing, educational and practical teachings, comments, and the sense of immediacy.

References

[1] Adams MB, Kaplan B, Sobko HJ, Kuziemsky C, Ravvaz K, Koppel R. Learning from Colleagues about Healthcare IT Implementation and Optimization: Lessons from a Medical Informatics Listserv. J. of Medical Systems 2015: 39 (1): 1-6.