

Editorial – Inaugural issue of the SLJBMI, 6 January 2010

It is just born

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This is the Inaugural Issue of the Sri Lanka Journal of Bio-Medical Informatics (SLJBMI). It is an exclusively e-Journal published quarterly. It will permit comprehensive, free, full-text access to all.

This journal deals with health informatics, health care informatics, medical informatics and bioinformatics – in short anything that borders on eHealth. This field is the intersection of information science, computer science, biology, medicine, and health care ⁽¹⁾. It deals with the resources, devices and methods required to facilitate and optimize the acquisition, storage, retrieval and use of information in health and bio-medicine. Health informatics tools include not only computers but also clinical guidelines, formal medical terminologies and information and communication systems. It is also generally applicable to a variety of areas such as clinical care, nursing, dentistry, pharmacy, public health, other para-medical disciplines and bio-medical research.

Work in this field involves architectures for electronic medical records and other health information systems used for billing, scheduling and research, decision support systems in healthcare, standards such as DICOM and HL7, integration profiles, controlled medical vocabularies (CMVs) such as the Systematized Nomenclature of Medicine (SNOMED), Clinical Terms (CT), MEDCIN, Logical Observation Identifiers Names and Codes (LOINC), OpenGALEN Common Reference Model or the highly complex UMLS and even the use of hand-held or portable devices to assist providers with data entry and data retrieval or medical decision-making. The international standards on the subject are covered by ICS 35.240.80 ⁽²⁾ in which ISO 27799:2008 is one of the core components ⁽³⁾.

Medical informatics institutions and associations have been in existence since the late sixties⁽⁴⁾ and although they have flourished in some areas of the Western world, the Asian contribution to the field has not been all that visible or significant. However, some noteworthy developments have occurred in the region, particularly in Hong Kong, Australasia and Oceania. Our goal from the viewpoint of this new e-Journal is to ensure that the SLJBMI would help to make e-developments in this sphere in Sri Lanka and Asia primarily visible and perhaps engineer a meaningful impact even on the global scenario.

The SLJBMI today joins an elite band of bio-medical informatics publications numbering around 33 from right round the globe⁽⁵⁾. Some of these journals have significant impact factors and are read widely. The powers that be have deemed it fit to invite me to be the *Editor-in-Chief* and I have been provided with an excellent team in the Editorial Board. In this Inaugural Issue of SLJBMI, we have attempted to incorporate a significant and relevant conglomeration of different topics. We hope so very much that our work with this journal in the future will have some impact on the scenario of bio-medical informatics, nationally and internationally.

We are ever so grateful to the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) of Oxford, United Kingdom in general and to Mrs. Sioux Cumming and Miss Julie Walker of INASP in particular, for facilitating the on-line publication of this journal through their endeavour, Sri Lanka Journals On-Line <www.sljol.info>. Indeed, without them, this journal would not have seen the light of day.

Quality, just like beauty, is often in the eyes of the beholder. The significance and impact of SLJBMI would be judged only by its readership in the future. It is our fervent hope that the journal would go from strength to strength and become a flag-bearer for the specialty in the region in the not too distant future. From a personal viewpoint, I am delighted, greatly privileged and singularly honoured, to be the *Editor-in-Chief* of the SLJBMI.

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