

---

## Editorial

---

Welcome to this first volume of the *Journal of Health Informatics in Developing Countries* (JHIDC). The objective to be reached by launching this journal is to encourage and support research, discussion, and exchange of experiences related to health informatics in developing countries. It is hoped that the journal will become a valuable portal of currently disperse and scarce knowledge on the topic, as well as a source of encouragement to produce more information in this field.

This volume has seen a number of articles addressing different issues related to health informatics in developing countries. The article by Kimaro and Nhampossa addresses the issue of sustainability of health information systems presenting the experience of Mozambique and Tanzania. It identifies the relationships between Ministry of Health (MoH) and the software development agency, between the MoH and the donors, and between donors and the software development agency as three key factors shaping sustainability. Koleth, Chhanabhai and Holt discuss the convergence of communications and e-governance in the health sector. They make the point that communications and e-governance go hand in glove and that in developing country settings even simple technologies can go a long way. Malik and Khan's article focuses on the training curriculum of health informatics and illustrate how the curricula of different institutes varied. Presenting a case study of Pakistan, the article argues for the need to develop an agreed set of standardised competencies for health informatics, which will provide a guiding framework for the training programmes as well. Finally the fourth article by Oak presents a review on barriers to implementing health informatics in developing countries. Examining various publications on this topic, this article identifies poverty and technological implementations as the two major barriers in developing countries.

Articles published in this volume are indicative of the wide range of issues that relate to health informatics in developing countries. Health informatics is only just being taken up in developing countries and it is yet to become a mainstream component of health care. With the socio-economic challenges seen in developing countries, it cannot be said what shape or course health informatics will finally take. What can however be said is that there still is a lot of work and research to be done in this area.

Muzaffar A Malik  
Journal manager JHIDC  
University of Otago  
Dunedin, New Zealand