# Introduction for Minitrack: Consumer Health Informatics, Patient Safety and Quality of Practice

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Health Information Consumers are increasingly seeking access to timely, accurate and accessible information, as made possible through Information Technology (IT). These technological developments have direct implications for access, awareness and use of health information by consumers, as well as patient decision making, safety, and quality of health care provision. Healthcare information systems are expected to reduce medical errors, improve quality of patient care and safety. These systems are increasingly supporting evidence-based medicine and patient-centric technologies, including monitoring of patient outcomes and adverse events, as well as better informing and empowering consumers themselves to work for better outcomes. This mini-track embraces all aspects of consumer health informatics and consumer-centric technologies or studies aimed at improving patient safety and quality of care, including: supporting consumers taking an active role in understanding, deciding about and/or managing their health; doctor-patient communication; clinical guideline and protocol support; monitoring and prevention of adverse events; and electronic health records (especially, security and privacy, access control rights, and consumer ability to make entries into the health record, including home monitoring). The Consumer Health Informatics, Patient Safety and Quality of Practice Minitrack uses the international and interdisciplinary forum provided by HICSS for the expression of practical, theoretical, academic and industrial insight in this area.

The paper by Chan, Ray and Parameswaran entitled "A Multi-Agent Collaborative Framework for Mobile E-Health" illustrates the role of technology in increasing awareness and collaboration among health care stakeholders (consumers and providers) by providing a computer-supported collaborative framework for mobile e-health monitoring. Personal health monitoring is integral to the theme of consumer health informatics in this information age, where technology is more accessible and health monitoring has a direct impact in health outcomes and patient safety.

The next paper, "A Classifier to Evaluate Language Specificity of Medical Documents" analyses appropriateness of health information available by highlighting the disparity between readability of the general consumer of health information, and that of the provider of such information. This paper aims to assist health care professionals in evaluating the consumer health information they provide.

The paper entitled "An Electronic Health Record as an Open System" discusses barriers to adoption of the Electronic Health Record (HER) and suggests an open EHR as a possible solution to the integration of health information across hospitals, with the scene set in the Netherlands. Theoretical concepts are applied from developments of business information systems and diffusion and adoption of innovation, in order to provide cross-disciplinary conceptual solutions to these barriers. These theoretical concepts are discussed in the context of the integration of quality of care in medical research and practice.

These papers provide concepts as well as practical insights in the areas of mobile e-Health monitoring, assessment, access and use of consumer health information, as well as discussing the EHR. Together they provide an overview of some of the current issues relevant to the area of Consumer Health Informatics, Patient Safety and Quality of Practice and provide a starting point for further discussion in this area.