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Telehealth Innovations in Remote Healthcare Services Delivery

Global Telehealth 2020

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Preface

This Global Telehealth 2020 volume marks the tenth year for the series, which was conceived in 2010 with a regional academic meeting held under the auspices of the Australasian Telehealth Society. The series has evolved since then to take on a somewhat different character each year, sometimes based on formal conference events such as a track or satellite of a major international meeting, and sometimes based on specialist workshops convened on contemporary topics of interest. Cooperative organisation of these events has been undertaken with the support of a variety of professional bodies, including the International Medical Informatics Association through its Telehealth Working Group and its Asia-Pacific regional arm, as well as several of its national member societies, and also the International Society for Telemedicine and eHealth.

This year necessitated a different approach due to the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic and its severe impact in restricting normal academic meeting activities. After exploring several virtualised options, it was decided that a conventional conference model would not be feasible. Instead a general call for contributions was issued, with the intention of attracting a wide cross section of contributions indicative of the breadth of different aspects of telehealth internationally, and especially targeting many past Global Telehealth sources which have continued to contribute productively in the expansion of telehealth theory and practice. We were encouraged and supported in this endeavour by numerous colleagues from the IMIA Telehealth WG who provided many members of the expert reviewer panel. We also benefitted from new collaborations within the Asia-Pacific region, fostered through several active telehealth interest groups associated with the University of Hawai'i.

The resulting volume offers a number of snapshots of research projects and service experience studies, from projects in five continents: Africa, Asia, Australia, North America, and South America. There is an emphasis on delivering benefits in regional settings, following the book theme of "Telehealth Innovations in Remote Healthcare Services Delivery". The contributions range from descriptions of particular telehealth networks and clinical service instances such as cardiac health, mental health, pathology, several of these in Pacific rim settings, to more generic direction and position papers on the evolution of such services as well as some commentaries on innovative considerations for telehealth such as the emergence of the concept of virtual care, the suitability of health apps, and the status of eHealth readiness in the developing world.

We hope that this volume continues to add to the body of knowledge on current telehealth research interests and trends through the broad sample of cases provided here. The need to promote academic activities in telehealth remains a high priority as it expands its influence in new areas of healthcare. Although not selected as a direct topic for this book, the COVID-19 pandemic response has been an excellent example of the rapid diversification and impact attainable with telehealth, and may kindle a new momentum for accelerated service design and adoption processes in the future.

We acknowledge the substantial financial and in-kind support provided to this endeavour by the Flinders Digital Health Research Centre at Flinders University Tonsley Campus, Adelaide and by the Pacific Basin Telehealth Resource Center at University of Hawai'i Manoa Campus, Honolulu. We also thank the members of the international

review committee for their thorough and insightful critique of the papers submitted and in making the final selection of those included on a peer review basis.

Anthony Maeder, Christina Higa, Maayken van den Berg and Claire Gough
Global Telehealth 2020 co-Editors

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