



### **National health management information systems policy review in Nigeria: what roles for health information management professionals?**

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We welcome readers and contributors to this unique and special 4<sup>th</sup> volume of IJHRIM. The edition is unique and special as it marks the beginning of a lot of new things in health information management profession in Nigeria and as well our core values in scholarly publishing. First, the Editorial Board wishes to congratulate the erstwhile co-Publisher of IJHRIM, the first substantive Registrar/CEO of Health Records Officers' Registration Board of Nigeria (HRORBN), Alhaj Mohammed Ibrahim Mami, for his two-term successful tenure that graciously ended in July 2021. We equally wish to congratulate and welcome the new 'bulldozer', Alhaj Mustapha Babagana, for stepping into this elevated position of regulating HIM profession in Nigeria as the new and 2nd substantive Registrar/CEO. This office is very strategic to the continuity and sustainability of our dear Journal - IJHRIM. Going back memory lane to the events between 2015 and 2017, it is evident that the appointment of Editor-in-Chief by the HRORBN and subsequent election of same by AHRIMPN led to the emergence of this scholarly journal. That was the moments when Editorial Consultant, Dr B. M. Oweghoro and the erstwhile Registrar, Alhaj Mami, beckoned on the Editor-in-Chief to hold this scholarly task with passion<sup>1</sup>. We are grateful that today, we have been able to maintain their trust and enliven their confidence.

Second, HIM professionals in Nigeria have resolved to step up their practice and embrace in totality, the responsibility of ensuring a seamless and effective management of patients' health records and hospital-held information at all levels. This is especially at the primary health care level, at this critical time, when the Federal Government, through the Federal Ministry of Health is considering a review of the 2014 NHMIS Policy document. In the month of June 2021, a tripartite arrangement, which involved the Association of Health Records and Information Management (AHRIMPN), HRORBN and Cademy Research Network organized a National Conference on National Health Information Management System (NHIMS) at Chida International Hotel in Abuja, Nigeria, which marked the beginning of this renewed attitude of health data managers in Nigeria. The Conference, due to the quest for improved health data quality, mandates all HIM professionals to be alive to their responsibilities; ensure high quality data collection and timely dissemination of data for informed public health decision making. The Conference also seeks intervention for more employment opportunities for HIM professionals; adequate funding for health information systems; policy formulation on health information management; engagement of HIM professionals in health information systems policy framework and provisions for continuing capacity building for HIM professionals in Nigeria from the Government as well as the private sector.

Articles in this edition focus on related developments in the profession that support the outcome of the Abuja NHIMS conference. Three of the articles x-rayed primary health care information systems. For instance, Onyemauche *et al* advocate a web-based records management system at the primary health care level, Abbah *et al* showcase the impacts of local technical assistants in ensuring health data quality at primary health care system and Mshelia *et al* identify the challenges and prospects of National Health Management Information System<sup>2-4</sup>. Related to the NHIMS Conference and to the theme of the forthcoming 41<sup>st</sup> National Scientific Conference/Annual General Meeting of AHRIMPN [*Harnessing quality data for combating COVID-19 pandemic: the role of health information management professionals*], the spotlight of three other articles is health data quality assurance. These include Abbah *et al* on Kaduna PHC, Akinyemi *et al* on EMR data quality at Ekiti State University Teaching Hospital and Salihu on health information system data quality policy in Ogun State<sup>3-6</sup>.

Although related panic about COVID-19 has reduced in Nigeria, the effect of the pandemic is still living with the people<sup>7</sup>. On this note, Oweghoro *et al* determine COVID-19 knowledge and perception of HIM professionals in relation to HIM practice, Omidoyin reassesses its impact on HIM education<sup>8,9</sup>. Following the desirability of Health IT in a developing nations like Nigeria, Onyemauche *et al* recommend web based records system at primary health care level, Akinyemi, on EMR data quality, Owolabi *et al* recount gains of health data digitization at tertiary hospitals, Ejeh looks into the legal requirements of big data in Nigeria and Muhammad *et al* on mHealth adoption among physicians in Kebbi<sup>2,5,10-12</sup>.

The Editorial Board wishes to appreciate our contributors and readers for keeping faith with the Journal.

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