Preface

Social Media and Mobile Technologies in healthcare is an evolving topic area within both the healthcare and information technology domains. Thousands of mobile health (mHealth) applications exist on the market today targeting a variety of health consumer/patients, clinicians, and academics. MHealth applications exist for health education, self-management, monitoring, health promotion, and other uses. For years, there has been a disconnect in the literature between the field of mHealth and social networking for healthcare. Much of the literature on mHealth has focused on interventions at the individual level without considering the influence of group social interactions and their impact on behavioral change. Recently, there has been an increase in mHealth applications that incorporate social networking elements to promote healthy group behavior. Nevertheless, the field remains in its infancy, with few frameworks, models, or definitions for the integration of social networking into mHealth applications. The use of social networking in mHealth applications will shift the focus from the individual’s attempts to modify or monitor their health to group support of the individual through social networking via mHealth software and hardware. Consequently, individuals will receive differing levels of support from groups of people, which may result in improved health. The impetus behind this book is to promote the use of social networking within mHealth applications, which is a field referred to as Mobile Social Networking in Healthcare (MSNET-Health).

Due to the book being grounded in current research, it can be used for graduate courses in health informatics, healthcare policy, health management, medicine, and other health professional courses. The book will play a role in helping students to understand the various frameworks, models, challenges, and real life applications of social media and mobile technologies in healthcare.

The book is organized into 17 chapters that address the topic of social media and mobile technologies in healthcare. The book addresses innovative concepts and critical issues from various parts of the world including the United States of America, Canada, Australia, Germany, Italy, Malaysia, Jordan, and Botswana. This represents the international character of the book, which is an indication of growth in the topic and its importance globally.

The 17 chapters are organized into 4 overall themes: 1) conceptual frameworks and models; 2) overview of the field; 3) real life implementations and cases; and 4) challenges and issues in social media and mobile technologies in healthcare. Four chapters discuss the first theme of conceptual frameworks and models. Chapter 1, “Review of the Consumer Perspective Framework for Healthcare Applications,” discusses a range of issues and concerns that should be considered when downloading mHealth applications. Chapter 2, “Success Dimensions of the Online Healthcare Communities of Practice: Towards an Evaluation Framework,” provides an overview of the use of social media technologies by health communities of practice. Chapter 3, “Incorporating Usability Testing into the Development of Healthcare
Technologies,” concentrates on providing a model for understanding of how use-centered design processes can be incorporated into the design and development of mobile applications. Chapter 4, “Mobile Technologies in the Emergency Department: Towards a Model for Guiding Future Research,” presents a model that describes the current state of research in using mHealth technologies in the emergency department.

The second theme of the book focuses on various review papers that represent a high-level view of social media and mobile technologies in healthcare. Chapter 5, “Use Cases and Application Purposes of Social Media in Healthcare,” examines the role of social media in healthcare and the various possibilities it presents. Chapter 6, “The Past, the Present, and the Future: Examining the Role of the ‘Social’ in Transforming Personal Healthcare Management of Chronic Disease,” argues for the need to advance conceptual thinking on how health and IT are now interacting at the level of patients and citizens. Chapter 7, “Synopsis for Health Apps: Transparency for Trust and Decision Making,” centers on developing a case for the formation of a clear structure for the providing credible and trustworthy information on the use of mHealth applications. Chapter 8, “Creating a Supportive Environment for Self-Management in Healthcare via Patient Electronic Tools,” reviews “eTools” for the assessment, tracking, and treatment of diseases.

The third theme focuses on real cases where social media and mobile technologies have been implemented in healthcare. Chapter 9, “Online Health Information: Home Caregiver Population Driving Cyberspace Searchers in the United States,” examines the use of social media and mobile technologies in healthcare in relation to aging. Chapter 10, “Nurses Using Social Media and Mobile Technology for Continuing Professional Development: Case Studies from Australia,” looks at the use of social media and mobile technologies for continuing professional education in Australia. Chapter 11, “An Android Mobile-Based Environmental Health Information Source for Malaysian Context,” provides an overview of a mHealth application that is used to visualize location and environmental health reports from aggregated social media feeds in Malaysia. Chapter 12, “The Introduction and Evaluation of Mobile Devices to Improve Access to Patient Records: A Catalyst for Innovation and Collaboration,” discusses the authors’ work in providing access to the British Columbia Cancer Agency Information System through mobile devices. Chapter 13, “Analysis and Linkage of Data from Patient-Controlled Self-Monitoring Devices and Personal Health Records,” discusses the current landscape of self-tracking devices and examines how the data collected from such devices could be integrated into the clinical health record of the patient or consumer, thereby making the data more useful for management of chronic conditions and maintaining good health. Chapter 14, “Social Media for Health Communication: Implementation Issues and Challenges for Italian Public Health Authorities,” analyses the official communication of healthcare organizations within Italy. Chapter 15, “Social Media in Promoting HIV/AIDS Prevention Behavior among Young People in Botswana,” explores the impact of social media on influencing the behavior of young people in relation to HIV/AIDS.

The fourth and final theme of the book focuses on the upcoming challenges for mHealth and social media technologies. Chapter 16, “Personal Health in my Pocket: Challenges, Opportunities, and Future Research Directions in Mobile Personal Health Records,” discusses the various challenges and opportunities and future research for the development, implementation, and use of mobile personal health records. The final chapter, Chapter 17, “Mobile Health Technology in the US: Current Status and Unrealized Scope,” reviews the challenges associated with implementing mobile technologies in healthcare institutions in the United States of America.
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