Research Perspectives on the Role of Informatics in Health Policy and Management is an important new piece of work in the field that will be of interest and very useful for researchers, decision makers, and graduate students interested in the application of health informatics to a broad array of health system issues. The book’s uniqueness and importance is evident in three respects.

First, this volume, which is divided into three sections, integrates work from a broad range of other disciplines. Research in health informatics, health policy, and healthcare organization and management is often discipline specific – an approach that is important for the deeper understanding of theory and practice it encourages in each of these areas. However, the current book, Research Perspectives on the Role of Informatics in Health Policy and Management, fills a gap that persists in the application of knowledge from other disciplines to existing and emerging health management and policy problems. As a field, healthcare practitioners and researchers would benefit tremendously from taking greater advantage of and integrating well-developed bodies of work that exist in the social sciences and other relevant fields such as engineering. Research Perspectives on the Role of Informatics in Health Policy and Management does an excellent job of integrating knowledge from a wide number of these disciplines and applying that knowledge to the study of pressing health care challenges. In doing so, the current work recognizes that the application of health informatics solutions is not a straightforward rational process in which new and superior technology is seamlessly applied to improve information and quality of care. Instead, many of the chapters recognize and make efforts to address the kind of non-rational barriers to the use of information technology that remain pervasive (e.g. competing stakeholder interests).

Second, there is a very broad micro to macro application approach that is evident when these 14 chapters are considered together. Research Perspectives on the Role of Informatics in Health Policy and Management brings a cross-disciplinary approach to applying health informatics to health management and health policy challenges. Inherent in this work is an underlying recognition that health informatics, as a field, provides more than technological solutions to small-scale practical problems. Instead, knowledge and applications from the field of health informatics can be applied to a broad range of significant health care, management, and policy issues that plague health systems at the most macro as well as the most micro levels.

Finally, the compilation of chapters found in this volume move beyond traditional settings and sectors. Research Perspectives on the Role of Informatics in Health Policy and Management is a must read for those interested in thinking about how health informatics can be applied beyond in-patient and out-patient settings to other sectors such as public health and health policy decision making.

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