Over the past decade, medical informatics has slowly expanded its focus from the early physician-centric data and applications to a model that allows end-users, including the patients, to access, manipulate, and hopefully comprehend data about their personal health, their medical history, and their prognoses. It is clear that e-services that are designed to fulfill the promise of understanding and controlling one’s own health data will lead to a revolution in the practice of medicine and health maintenance services. Researchers looking at web-based services understand more every day about the complexities of the challenges presented by this coming revolution, and a concerted effort by specialists in information technologies, behavior, and health disciplines will be required.

Given the growth rates for e-health service research and development, the fields of information systems and service science, as well as public health, have been in need of a compilation of significant examples of patient-centric health informatics research. A new volume edited by Dr. Vance Wilson addresses this need by offering conceptual foundations and solid studies of exemplar applications of patient centered health information tools. The text takes a broad, international view and includes thirty-eight authors and twenty-six chapters in two main sections.

Some in traditional medical communities have suggested that the development of patient-centric e-health initiatives has the potential to diminish input from traditional medical and healthcare institutions. On the contrary, the varied studies in this text paint a picture of the new, patient-centric, e-health model that can actually enhance the effectiveness of the efforts and technical input from medical providers. With the patient increasingly in control, accompanied by full collaboration with medical institutions, a new e-healthcare model in the United States and elsewhere can become the standard of effectiveness in health maintenance and prevention. Dr. Wilson’s book includes articles by a wide variety of researchers in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Denmark, Finland, Argentina and Norway. The fact that the text offers such a broad international view is evidence of the pervasive...
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