Reviewer's report

Title: A Stimulus to Define Informatics and Health Information Technology

Version: 1 Date: 22 April 2009

Reviewer: James Cimino

Reviewer's report:

1. Does the debate present a novel argument, or a novel insight into existing work?
   Yes - this is a nice attempt to clarify the terminology that swirls around health IT and informatics.

2. Does the debate address an important problem of interest to a broad biomedical audience?
   Yes - I often find myself trying to explain these things so it will be nice to have a place to point people.

3. Is the piece well argued and referenced?
   Yes - it includes references to many works that attempt to set working definitions.

4. Has the author used logical arguments and sound reasoning?
   It is all opinion, but it is reasonable opinion.

5. Is the piece written well enough for publication?
   Yes, I did not have any suggestions for edits.

Discretionary revisions:

In general, the paper is easy to read and well written. Since it invites debate, I might as well kick things off. The author can choose to modify based on these comments or can let the comments simply stand as part of the ensuing debate.

Having grown up in the field alongside Bill, we share many of the same perspectives and definitions. I would suggest some changes to Figure 1, however:

- Clinical research informatics is not in the figure - I guess it should be "biomedical and health informatics" -> "research informatics" -> "clinical research informatics". It might also be under "clinical informatics"

- I would not include "Medical Informatics" at all - I think it is an outmoded term (unfortunately, since that is what my fellowship was called and what my
professional organizations are called). MI used to encompass many things - nonbiologists thought it included bioinformatics, but bioinformaticians didn't. I would draw it with "Biomedical and Health Informatics"

having the children "Bioinformatics", "Clinical Informatics" and "Public Health Informatics" (also "Biomedical Library Informatics" and "Health Education Informatics") and then put the specialized clinical informatics fields as children of Clinical Informatics

- I think there is more to bioinformatics than translational bioinformatics

- I think that Bill's definition of "translational research" is too narrow - many people consider gene-> protein research to be translational (and protein->function, function->pathway,

  pathway->cell function, cell function-> organism function, organism function -> bedside, bedside -> community).

Other than that, I am in complete agreement (including "informatician" vs "informatacist"), which is pretty remarkable.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.