ABSTRACT

Emerging from the early recognition that computers might play a powerful role in the future of health care and medical research, biomedical informatics has become a mature but interdisciplinary discipline that draws on many component sciences. These include computer science, decision science, information science, statistics, organizational theory, and management science—as well as the clinical and basic biomedical sciences. In light of the increasing recognition of its key role in modern care delivery as well as clinical and translational research, I offer a definition of the field and a perspective on its role in clinical medicine, public health, and biomedical research. Its academic role as well as its accomplishments and challenges in practice settings will be discussed. Imaging is an important element in the broad spectrum of the informatics discipline. I will close with some thoughts about future directions and synergies with other biomedical disciplines, since informatics does not exist in a vacuum and all informatics research is inherently collaborative.

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