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The HIM Career Matrix: Illuminating a Framework for Professional Advancement

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Objectives

- Health Information Management (HIM) remains an enigmatic profession in Canada.
- Successful promotion of HIM requires that we develop better marketing strategies to inform individuals of the available career options and advancement possibilities within our profession.
- Zinser (2001) reported that a career matrix can be an effective means of detailing the depth and breath of occupational opportunities existing within an industry or organization.
- The matrix is a visual illustration that frames professional roles (along a vertical axis) crossed by the different levels of available achievement/promotion (along a horizontal axis).
- By focussing on professional roles, rather than people, the matrix affords the illumination of the “full prospect of an attainable career” from entry level to higher management positions (Zinser, 2001; p.9)
- This project sought out to develop the first, Canadian HIM career matrix in order to:
 1. Support a common language to describe the seven core competency areas in which HIM professionals can work;
 2. Describe new and evolving roles in HIM in Canada;
 3. Provide information on advanced career options available within our profession; and
 4. Seek consensus around the common functions performed by Canadian HIM professionals.

Materials & Methods

- In 2013, an ongoing, web-based search for job descriptions (JD) and actual job postings in North America began across the domains of health and education. These were cached into electronic files, and were continually screened by KA for their applicability to HIM in Canada.
- Using snowball sampling, in 2014, HIM professionals, human resource professionals, and management were invited to submit JD of all current and/or evolving roles involving/related to HIM within their workplace including higher-level, executive positions. They were also asked to forward contact information for colleagues including those working within new and/or evolving contexts (e.g., workforce transformation initiative for Alberta Health Services).
- In 2015, a corpus of about 400 JD was reviewed again by KA with inclusion criteria set that each must: 1) be within the eHealth/HIM field; 2) have employability requirements matching HIM learning content at the diploma, undergraduate, or masters level; and 3) have been filled by an HIM professional.
- Content analysis was then used, by EZ and KA, to afford drafting JD across a consistent, written genre outlining their educational requirements, major responsibilities, and required skills and experience. JD were then sorted into groups by education, experience requirements, and core competency area. The career matrix was plotted using Excel (see Figure).
- In 2016, the entire matrix (with JD) was expertly reviewed by 15 volunteers including HIM professionals at large, the CEO and Registrar of CHIMA, and members from the CCHIM Council on Education and Professional Practice. Differences amongst reviewers’ opinions were discussed until consensus was reached regarding inclusions, exclusions, and descriptive edits to JD and/or their groupings. Final approvals by Board and Council are pending.

Results & Figure

	Health Information Management (HIM)	Privacy & Security	HIM Standards	HI/HIM Education	Health Information Analytics & Research	Information Governance (IG)	Business Intelligence & Sustainability
ADVANCED 14+ years experience in higher level HIM and health experience. Masters degree preferred, in some positions it is a requirement. CCHIM certification is a requirement in some positions and a requirement in others. Additional certifications may be required.	Director, HIM/Health Information Services	Manager, Privacy & Security/Privacy & Risk/Access & Disclosure Senior Specialist	Lead, Data Exchange Standards	Program Coordinator	Senior Policy Analyst	IMG Liaison	Director, Health Funding
	Chief Quality Officer	Information Stewardship, Policy, and Standards	Manager, Terminology Standards		Director, Population Health	IM Standards Specialist	Senior Business Analyst
	Director, Clinical Documentation Improvement		Clinical Terminology Standards Specialist		Lead, Decision Support		Senior Decision Support Manager, Corporate and Administration
	Registry Manager				Director, Health Analytics		
	Senior Specialist Clinical Informatics/Senior Information Management Advisor				Senior Methodologists/Researcher, Health System Performance		Director, Risk & Outcomes Management, Knowledge Translation & Policy
	Director, Coding & Health Informatics				Director, Data Integrity		Executive Coordinator Information Flow & Decisions
Provincial Lead, Cancer Registry						Project Manager, CI	
INTERMEDIATE 4-7 years HIM experience. Bachelor's degree or diploma are the minimum educational requirements, Masters degree would be an asset. CCHIM	Data Quality/Community Care Records Manager	HIM Privacy Officer	Content Management Specialist	HIM Instructor	Program Lead, Health Analytics	IM Auditor	Business System Analyst
	Cancer Registry Data Quality Specialist	Information Access & Privacy Coordinator	Information Officer, Reference Sets	Manager eLearning Curriculum & Training	Decision Support Analyst	IM Policy Analyst	Process Improvement Specialist/Manager
	Site Manager, Cancer Registry	Privacy Specialist	Senior Standards Analyst	Curriculum Developer/Instructional Designer	Population Health Analyst	Information/Data Steward	Manager, Clinical Programs
	Cancer Registry Coordinator		HIM Coding Specialist, Terminology	HIM Coding Trainer Coordinator	Business Analyst	Information Standards Specialist	Transition & Change Management Lead
	CDI Specialist		Lead, eHealth		IM Analyst		Risk Analyst (not on draft JD)
					Information Display Systems		Cancer Registry Business

- The matrix was framed across a 7 (core competency) x 5 (education/experience) array (see Figure).
- 104 jobs were plotted. Most prevalent were jobs related to HIM (28/104, 27%) and Business Intelligence & Sustainability (24/104, 23.1%). The fewest were located in Health Informatics/HIM Education (6/104, 5.8%).
- In terms of education/experience requirements, almost half of jobs were at the intermediate level (Bachelor's degree/diploma plus 3-7 yrs experience; 48/104).
- The fewest number of jobs required a Master's degree or higher plus 10+ yrs experience (15/104, 14.4%).
- Expert review revealed 20 roles known to exist across competencies, but not represented in the matrix (pink cells in Figure). The majority of these were related to Business Intelligence & Sustainability and Health Information Analytics & Research (13/20).

Next Steps

- This project is a first step towards advancing awareness and understanding of potential career paths within our profession.
- The career matrix should provide opportunity for dialogue amongst employers, health leaders, and instructors, professors and their students.
- Future activities include development of career planning tools, illumination of career trajectories, and mapping of jobs to current salary trends.