



Biomedical and Health Informatics Lecture Series
Thursday, May 12, 2011
1:30 - 2:20 p.m., Room E-216

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“Machine Translation for Health: The TransPHorm Project”

For the over 46 million people living in the U.S. with limited English proficiency, obtaining accurate and up-to-date health information can be very challenging. The vast majority of health information on the Internet is only available in English. The demand for translation of multi-lingual health materials is not being met in part because of the time and resources it takes to create high quality translations. Machine translation technology holds promise for creating health translations efficiently and accurately. However, the quality of automated translations for public health materials is currently poor.

Dr. Turner will discuss a National Library of Medicine (NLM) funded project to investigate the use of machine translation technology to improve the time and costs of producing translations of health promotion materials. The goal of TransPHorm is to improve automated translations of public health materials and to compare manual and automated translations in terms of costs, turnaround time, and quality. Preliminary results on our studies of current translation processes, available health department promotion materials in Washington State and the ability of machine translation to assist in creating translated public health materials will be covered.

Dr. Turner is an Assistant Professor in the School of Public Health and the School of Medicine at the University of Washington (UW). Her informatics training includes a Master's Degree in Library and Information Sciences (2001) and completion of a National Library of Medicine Fellowship in Medical Informatics (2004). Dr. Turner's background in medicine, information sciences and public health brings a unique perspective to health informatics research. Over the last ten years she has focused on improving the transfer of health information within public health practice using qualitative methods and natural language processing technology. Most recently she is applying principles of user-centered design and machine translation to improve access to public health information for limited English proficiency populations.

NOTE: Podcasts from MEBI 590 Lecture Series talks for this quarter are available at <http://courses.washington.edu/mebi590/schedule.htm>

Podcasts from previous quarters are available at <http://courses.washington.edu/mebi590/past.lecture.schedules.html>