

**Title:** International Medical Graduates' contributions to the United States health workforce.

**Continuing Medical Education conflict of interest disclosures:** None

**Keywords:** International Medical Graduates (IMGs), US Health Workforce, Employment, Health Professions

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**Purpose of Study:** Almost one-quarter of physicians in graduate training and practice in the United States are graduates of international medical schools (IMGs)<sup>1</sup>. In addition to their ongoing contribution to the United States (US) physician workforce, IMGs are also employed in many other health professions. Their previous employment experience may also benefit IMGs in their health workforce career. Our research explores the available employment data reported by IMGs applying for the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) Certification from January 2007 to December 2015. These findings will contribute to the existing research related to the US health workforce supply.

**Methods:** IMGs interested in applying for residency and pursuing licensure in the US must obtain ECFMG Certification. Included in these analyses are IMGs who applied to ECFMG and took at least one USMLE examination between January 2007 and December 2015. The application includes questions pertaining to current employment, including job title and specialty (where applicable), job category, employer and location of employment. Before September 2013, the job category field was an open-ended item. After this date, the question became close-ended with a list of available job categories. All open-ended answers were manually coded to the available list of job categories.

**Key Findings:** 31.0% of the 142,185 IMGs who applied to ECFMG between January 2007 and December 2015 and took at least one examination reported their employment position. A total of 43,254 (30.4%) of the IMG employment responses were categorized and have been included in the analysis. Of these, nearly a quarter (24.9%) reported they were currently working as a physician; 11.9% as non-physician health professionals; 13.9% were working in research, 34.1% as a postgraduate trainee, and 5.0% reported they were professors. 29.7% of those reporting employment were currently working in the United States. Of these, 31.7% were practicing in a non-physician health profession (including allied health and health administration), 40.7% in research, 4.5% as a professor, and 22.6% were employed in some other capacity.

**Implications:** When considering IMG's contributions to the US health workforce, it is important to capture both physician and non-physician employment. Overall, a large proportion of IMGs were employed at the time of their application, and had experience as a health professional. Furthermore, many IMGs contribute to the US health workforce in other roles: as non-physician health professionals, researchers, and professors. Previous experience in the health field can be of benefit to IMGs pursuing

education and practice in the US, and may provide added perspective for physicians in their future team-based care.

**References:**

- 1 Brotherton SE, Etzel SI. Graduate medical education, 2013-2014. JAMA. 2014 Dec 10;312(22):2427-45.