



Impact on International Medical Graduates

Sheetal Gandotra, MD
Assistant Professor
Division of Pulmonary, Allergy and Critical Care Medicine
University of Alabama Birmingham
[@SGandotraMD](#)

Outline

- Challenges for graduates of international medical schools looking to pursue residency in the US
- Virtual interviews
- Visa and employment uncertainties
- Impact on the US Health Care System

IMG Medical Students

- Difficult to differentiate oneself from other candidates
- Changes to the licensing exams
 - Step 1 is now pass/fail
 - Step 2 CS has been cancelled
- Cancellations or limitations in ability to perform rotations in the US
 - Loss of time to acclimatize to US health care systems
 - Inability to obtain LORs
 - Unable to showcase their skills prior to residency applications
 - Decreased access to mentors

Virtual Interviews

- ✓ Decreased cost of travel/lodging
- ✗ ?Internet access and ability to do video interviews
- ✗ Time zone differences
- ✗ Loss of time to acclimatize to US health care systems
 - Interview questions may not always lend themselves well to their local practice



<https://blog-tf.doximity.com/how-to-make-the-most-of-virtual-interviews>

Visa Uncertainties

- Delays in visa processing for the upcoming year
 - ?Effect on IMGs at transition positions
 - Frequently changing
- ?Impact on family members/dependents of those who hold a current visa but need it extended or renewed or transitioned to a different visa program
- Concerns about job loss in systems that suffered financially during the pandemic
 - Usually these are underserved areas where IMGs tend to practice
- Huge area of stress for all non-US citizen IMGs



Impact on the US Health Care System

- Predicted shortfall of up to 121,900 physicians in the US by 2032¹
- Foreign trained physicians often work in underserved communities
- Foreign trained physicians constitute:
 - 23.6% overall physicians²
 - 25% of hospital based physicians²
 - 22% of physicians currently in residency²
 - 33% of 8,515 infectious diseases physicians³
 - 41% of 10,158 critical care physicians³
- Regulatory limitations prevent IMGs from assisting in areas of need during the pandemic

1. Association of American Medical Colleges. "2019 Update. The Complexities of Physician Supply and Demand: Projections from 2017 to 2032." *Association of American Medical Colleges*, 2019.
2. American Medical Association 2019 Masterfile
3. Association of American Medical Colleges. "Physician Specialty Data Report." Association of American Medical Colleges, 2015. December 1. <https://www.aamc.org/data-reports/workforce/interactive-data/active-physicians-who-are-international-medical-graduates-imgs-specialty-2015>

Addressing the Challenges

- Understanding the changes
 - ECFMG
 - American Medical Association
 - NRMP
- Seek mentors and seek to mentor!
- Programs need to re-evaluate their screening and application review processes
- Virtual Interviews
 - Consider time zones, applicant access and applicant concerns
 - Inform applicants about what to expect during their interview and tips for virtual interviews