

## International Students Seeking Medical Education in Iran; Challenges and Opportunities

Omid Azimaraghi<sup>1</sup>, Ali Movafegh<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Anesthesiology, Critical Care and Pain Medicine, School of Medicine, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran

<sup>2</sup> Professor, Department of Anesthesiology, Critical Care and Pain Medicine, School of Medicine, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran

Received: 23 Jan. 2017; Received in revised form: 16 Feb. 2017; Accepted: 28 Feb. 2017

**Citation:** Azimaraghi O, Movafegh A. **International Students Seeking Medical Education in Iran; Challenges and Opportunities.** *Acad J Surg*, 2017; 4(1): 1.

"Intercultural learning could be a beacon, illuminating a world of cultural differences and a common global humanity, building blocks for a just and peaceful world" (1). The first modern center of medical training in Iran was founded in 1851. It was a part of the Institute of Higher Education (Dar-ol-Fonoon). The School of Medicine was established as a part of University of Tehran in 1934. The Iranian medical education system has trained many physicians over the last decades whom have immigrated to other countries but since a few years ago, plans for attraction of international medical students have become a priority. Many countries around the world have generated comprehensive strategy plans to increase registrations from overseas students (2,3).

International students provide a boosted and enhanced understanding of the diversity of cultures; at the same time, universities and students face a variety of challenges and opportunities which should be taken into account. Universities cannot basically admit foreign students and anticipate self-adjustment to life in a new country and educational system without suitable support.

Adjustment challenges are principally related to language skills and cultural issues. The fact that registration of international students becomes upfront and ahead of changes made to language and cultural issues may sacrifice educational achievements. Principal university adjustments, which need to be boosted include informative websites with higher education information, funding for programs, educational programs in English with transferable credits and simplified visa and university application processes, some of which have been well adjusted at Tehran University of Medical Sciences with hundreds of international students from over 20 countries around

the world (4). It should also be noticed that economic issues are important factor in increasing the motivation of students to continue their studies abroad.

Increasing international students is not all about challenges and changes needed to be made to universities; apart from the apparent positive financial issues, many new opportunities are conveyed for the nation. Engaging globally with the rest of the world helps us be better equipped to tackle our everyday encounters and encourages the crossing of people and ideas. Although universities in Iran are still at the beginning of this long journey to become "internationally friendly" for international medical students who are seeking to continue their education in Iran, the journey has well started.

### References

1. Peterson DM, Briggs P, Dreasher L, Horner DD, Nelson T. Contributions of international students and programs to campus diversity. *New Dir Stud Serv* 1999; 1999(86): 67-77.
2. Joyce CM, Stoelwinder JU, McNeil JJ, Piterman L. Riding the wave: Current and emerging trends in graduates from Australian University Medical Schools. *Med J Aust* 2007; 186(6): 309-12.
3. Zimmermann S. Perceptions of intercultural communication competence and international student adaptation to an American campus. *Communication Education* 1995; 44(4): 321-35.
4. Office of Vice-Chancellor for Global Strategies and International Affairs, Tehran University of Medical Sciences. Available from: URL: <http://gsia.tums.ac.ir/en/page/2280/About>.

**Corresponding Author:** Ali Movafegh

Dr. Ali Shariati Hospital, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran  
Tel: +98 9122163787/Fax: +98 21 88220032, E-mail: movafegh@tums.ac.ir