Quality Assurance and Medical Education: ECFMG|FAIMER Initiatives

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Overview of Presentation

- What does ECFMG do?

- Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER) programs

- Collaboration with the WFME
  - 2023 initiative, WDMS

- Some thoughts related to quality improvement

ECFMG Certification

- 60+ year history of "regulating" IMGs

- Effective screening mechanism—only 60% of IMGs who take a USMLE® exam ultimately achieve ECFMG Certification

- Evaluates readiness of IMGs for US graduate medical education (GME)

  - Required to participate in accredited US GME

  - Required for unrestricted medical licensure

ECFMG Certification Requirements

Current Requirements:

- Medical school meets ECFMG requirements
- **Applicant passes USMLE Step 1, 2CK, and 2CS**
- Primary-source verification of diploma and transcript with medical school
- Applicants screened against the Specially Designated Nationals List

Credentialing

- Confirmation of medical school attendance and graduation

- Recognition of the medical school

- Verification of the diploma and/or transcript
  - Criteria for internationally trained doctors may differ
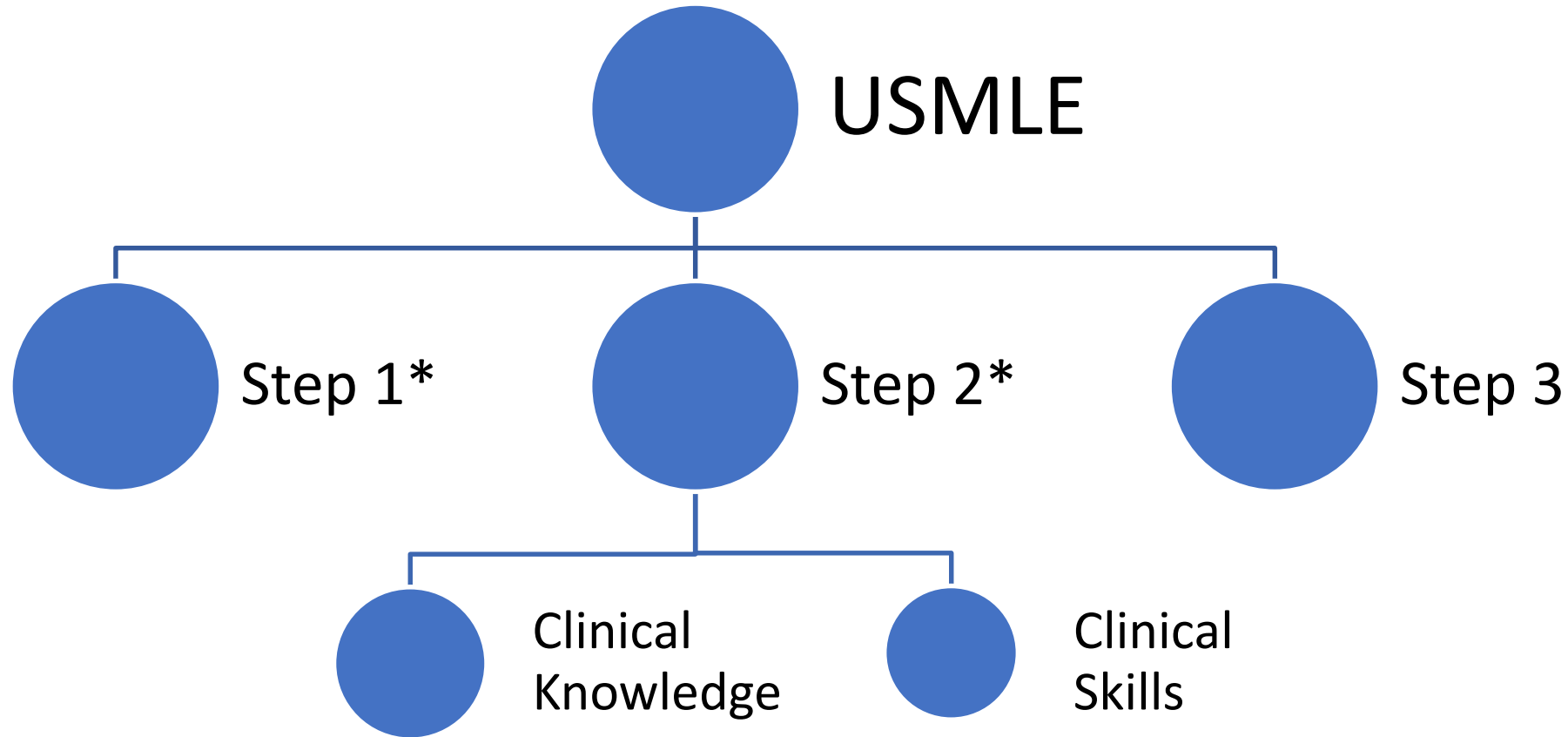
Spurious Medical School Schemes

What you see …

May be a façade.

ECFMG® | FAIMER®

Results Reported to State Medical Licensing Boards

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                    ( USMLE )

   ( Step 1* )      ( Step 2* )      ( Step 3 )

              ( Clinical      ( Clinical
                Knowledge )     Skills )
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*Passing performance required for ECFMG Certification

Evolution of Eligibility Requirements

Individual Requirements
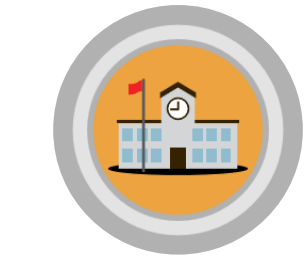
Diploma & License or Certificate of Full Registration

Diploma

Diploma and Transcript

1968

1998

2004

2002

2015

Listed in WHO's *World Directory of Medical Schools*

Listed in the *International Medical Education Directory (IMED)*

Schools with an ECFMG annotation listed in the *World Directory of Medical Schools*

Medical School Requirement

Centered on Individual Assessment

Individuals

Schools

Exams

Time in School

Transfer Credits

Credentials + PSV

Eligible for Licensure

2010 Report Concerns

- Some schools are issued a one-time permit to operate without follow-up

- 1/3 of countries do not have an accreditation program

- Accreditation, if available, is not always mandatory

- Significant variation of systems, duration, and standards

- Accrediting agencies differ in the specific protocols employed in implementing quality assurance reviews

Lack of oversight and/or self-regulation

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Centered on Individual Assessment

Individuals **Schools**

Exams

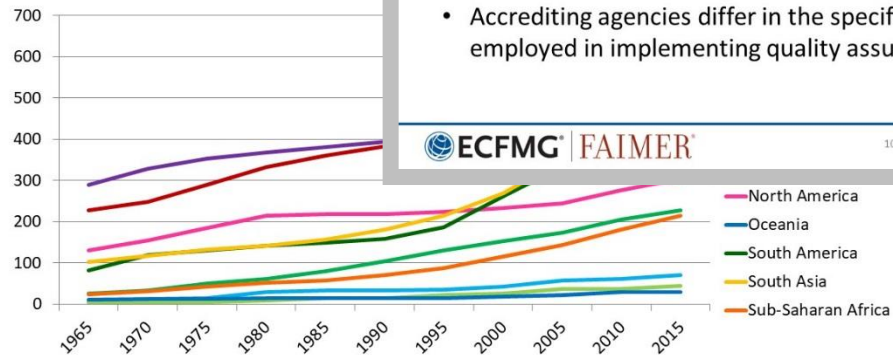Time in School

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Growth of Medical Sch

700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0

1965 1970 1975 1980 1985 1990 1995 2000 2005 2010 2015

— North America
— Oceania
— South America
— South Asia
— Sub-Saharan Africa

Makes it challenging to unequivocally ensure that IMGs meet basic medical knowledge requirements

So What Can We Do?

- No single entity can accredit all medical schools worldwide

- Yet there is a need for global standards

Solution: Instead of accrediting medical schools, let's go up one level to the accrediting agencies

2023 Accreditation Requirement

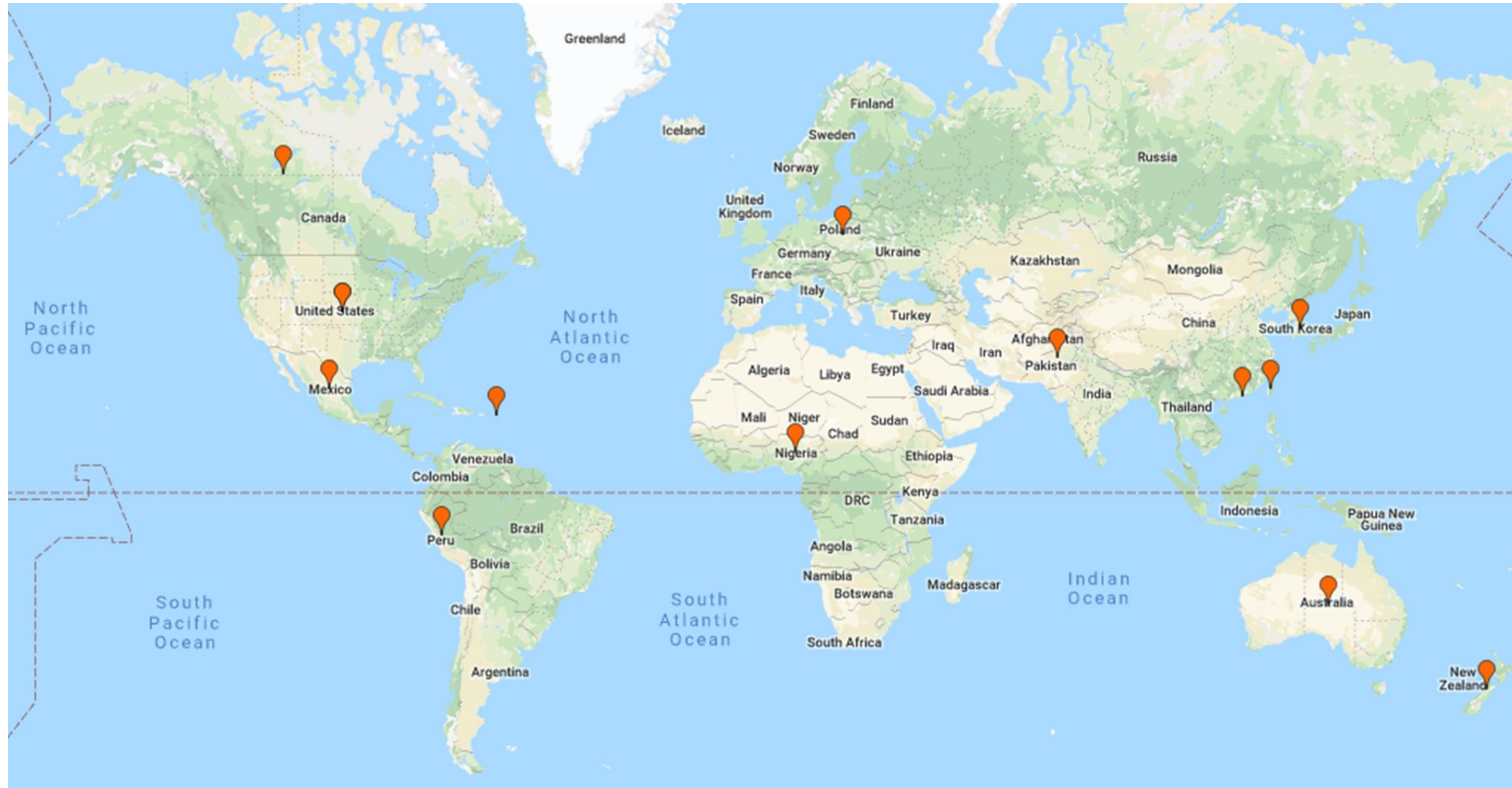ECFMG® + WORLD FEDERATION FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION (wfme)

Requirement:

- Beginning in 2023, individuals applying for ECFMG Certification must be a student/graduate of a medical school that is appropriately accredited by an accrediting agency that is officially recognized by the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME)

Goals:

- Stimulate international accreditation efforts
- Promote universally accepted standards for evaluating undergraduate medical education
- Enhance quality of medical education
- Protect the public

Medical Education Specific Accreditors 1980-1999

Medical Education Specific Accreditors 2000-2019

A More Balanced Approach

Individuals

Schools

Exams

Time in School

Transfer Credits

Credentials + PSV

Accredited

Eligible for Licensure

Why Accreditation?

Variability ➜ Harmonized Standards

- Globalization of medicine
- Migration of students for medical education
- Migration of physicians to:
  - Fill demand for healthcare providers
  - Escape conflict situations
- Medical volunteerism
- Medical tourism

Implementation Approach: Four Phases

2023 accreditation

Phase 1 – 2018

New ECFMG web resource to help students make better decisions on medical school selection

Phase 2 – 2020

World Directory of Medical Schools includes accreditation status of medical school

Phase 3 – 2021

ECFMG physician reports include information on accreditation status of medical school

Phase 4 – 2023

Eligibility for ECFMG Certification is tied to accreditation status of medical school

Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER)

- Educational programs
  - Philadelphia Institute, 11 Regional Institutes
    - Change agents for health professions education
  - Distance Learning
    - Certificate, Diploma, Master's Degree (with CENMEDIC/ Keele University)
      - Assessment & Accreditation
- Data Resources
  - World Directory of Medical Schools (WDMS), DORA
- Research
  - Workforce, quality of medical education, value of accreditation

World Directory of Medical Schools (WDMS)

- Collaboration between WFME and FAIMER

The mission of the World Directory of Medical Schools to list all of the medical schools in the world, with accurate, up-to-date, and comprehensive information on each school

https://www.wdoms.org/

Directory of Organizations that Recognize/Accredit Medical Schools (DORA)

List of countries and relevant accreditation authorities

- Duration, levels (conditional, full, probationary, etc.)

- Links to standards

- Links to process documents

- Outcomes / consequences of accreditation

https://www.faimer.org/resources/dora/index.html

Questions we Think About

1. How would you know that a medical school/residency program is doing a good job educating the students?

2. What evidence is there that "regulation" works?

3. What are the main challenges of gathering evidence to support licensure/registration, certification, maintenance of licensure/revalidation, accreditation?

4. Where can we get the data?

5. How can we improve the regulatory process?

Challenges

- Relatively few studies that have shown the efficacy of licensure examinations or the "quantifiable" value of accreditation

Why so Little Evidence?

- Designing meaningful research studies
  - Available outcome measures
  - Need for longitudinal data
- Validity and reliability of evaluation measures
- Confounding
- Team/ Individual
- Cost/ logistics

Kevin's new flight simulation game failed to live up to expectations

Some Final Reflections

- ECFMG|FAIMER promotes quality in many different ways
  - Certification, Education, 2023 mandate
- International accreditation efforts are expanding
  - Opportunity to improve education
  - Fosters greater transparency and public trust
  - Stakeholder engagement
- Evidence to support the validity of regulatory processes and decisions needs to be gathered
  - Cost/benefit of licensing and accreditation?