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.
Results Reported to State Medical Licensing Boards

*Passing performance required for ECFMG Certification
Evolution of Eligibility Requirements

Individual Requirements

Medical School Requirement

Diploma & License or Certificate of Full Registration

1968

Listed in WHO’s World Directory of Medical Schools

Diploma

1998

Diploma and Transcript

2004

Listed in the International Medical Education Directory (IMED)

2002

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

2015
Centered on Individual Assessment

- Individuals
  - Exams
  - Time in School
  - Transfer Credits
  - Credentials + PSV

- Schools
  - 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
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

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
A More Balanced Approach

Individuals
- Exams
- Time in School
- Transfer Credits
- Credentials + PSV

Schools
- 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
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?