

How to Nurture Professional Identity Formation in International Medical Graduates: Exploring Barriers and Supportive Strategies

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International Medical Graduates (IMGs) :



1. Defined as physicians who did not attend medical school in the United States or Canada
2. 250,000 (25%) of all active physicians are IMGs
3. Additional 25% in training
4. Practice characteristics: underserved areas, minority population, poverty, and population with less education

Factors Influencing Professional Identity Formation (PIF) of IMGs:

1. Role models
2. Mentors
3. Accumulation of individual experiences

Barriers in PIF of IMGs



1. Navigate dual learning curves
2. Feelings: Isolation, discrimination, lack of belonging
3. Migration-related personal and financial struggles
4. Specific immigration needs to maintain legal status
5. All career and personal decisions tied to restrictive immigration laws
6. Linguistic and cultural barriers
7. Lack of knowledge about their rights
8. Travel, moonlighting restrictions
9. Isolation from family and lack of social support

Supportive Strategies



1. Formal teaching: Patient-centered care, cultural sensitivity, and patient interviewing
2. Conducive environment: Nurturing an inclusive and welcoming climate
3. Assessment: Use of reflection to assess impact on professional identity formation
4. Mentoring: peer-to-peer, intergenerational, faculty
5. Faculty development: Awareness of mentors about IMG immigration issues, training about career guidance for IMG with respect to immigration status