



ORIGINAL

Doctors qualified from Chinese Universities with “English Parallel” courses registered with the General Medical Council



John Francis Mayberry

Department of Digestive Diseases, University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust, Gwendolen Road, Leicester LE5 4PW, UK

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KEYWORDS

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Abstract

Objective: To identify the number of Chinese graduates from medical schools in China with an English Parallel course through a Freedom of Information search of the current UK medical register.

Method: A Freedom of Information request was submitted to the General Medical Council to investigate the number of graduates from Chinese medical schools with MB BS courses using English as the medium of instruction.

Results: Details of 73 graduates were obtained. Twenty one of the registrants were Chinese and 52 South Asian. During the last decade there has been a significant increase in the number of Pakistani and Indian graduates who have registered with the GMC compared to Chinese graduates.

Conclusion: If the experience with Central and Eastern European “English Parallel” courses is repeated we should expect a significant growth in the numbers of British and EU citizens training and graduating in China and subsequently practicing in the UK.

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PALABRAS CLAVE

Estudiantes;
Medicina;
Registro;
Reino Unido;
Ciudadanía

El registro de los titulados de universidades chinas, con cursos de «Inglés Paralelo» con el Colegio de Médicos

Resumen

Objetivo: Identificar, a través de una búsqueda autorizada (Libertad de Información: Freedom of Information) en el Registro Médico del Reino Unido, el número de graduados chinos procedentes de las Facultades de Medicina chinas con un curso paralelo en inglés.

E-mail address: john.mayberry@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

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Método: Una solicitud de Libertad de Información se presentó al Consejo General de Médicos (GMC), para investigar el número de egresados de las Facultades de Medicina chinas con cursos BS MB que utilizan el inglés como lenguaje de instrucción.

Resultados: Se obtuvieron datos de 73 egresados. Veintiuno de los registrados fueron chinos y 52 del sur de Asia. Durante la última década ha habido un aumento significativo en el número de graduados paquistaníes e hindúes que se han registrado en el GMC en comparación a los graduados chinos.

Conclusión: Si se repite la experiencia con cursos de «Inglés Paralelo» de la Europa Central o del Este, debemos esperar un crecimiento significativo en el número de británicos y ciudadanos de la UE formados y graduados en China, que posteriormente practiquen en el Reino Unido.

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New knowledge

Nothing was previously known of the numbers or origins of graduates from Chinese medical schools with “English Parallel” courses. There are currently 73 such graduates in the UK of whom 53 are South Asian.

Effect on policy

It is likely that there will be a significant growth in the number of South Asian and British graduates from these Chinese schools. An underlying reason will be the fact that the courses and associated accommodation are “cheap” compared with those in Europe.

Introduction

It has recently been suggested that every year more than 10,000 international students go to China to study medicine, many selecting an English-medium MBBS degree. From 2007 the Ministry of Education has issued regulations for the “Provisions for Quality Control Standards on Undergraduate Medical Education in English for International Student in China” which have guided up to 50 schools recognised for such teaching. For British and other EU citizens provided that these schools are listed in the Avicenna Directory for Medicine, the World Directory of Medical Schools or the International Medical Education Directory and certain other criteria are met then graduation from one of these institutions entitles full registration in the UK with the General Medical Council (GMC) without the requirement of formal further assessment.¹ The emergence of a significant number of additional centres which provide medical education through the medium of English will ultimately have an impact on the number of junior doctors entering the British job market.

One of the attractions of training in China has been the low cost of the programmes. This has proven particularly so for students from India with more than 7000 currently at a Chinese medical school. Although Indian and Pakistani graduates from these medical schools will be required to follow the standard pathway of all non-EU citizens it is likely

some will ultimately choose to work in the UK. The cost of training at the UK’s first private medical school at the University of Buckingham will be about £35,000 per year.² This compares with £4500 per year including accommodation. In other words a six year complete training programme including accommodation at a leading Chinese medical school will cost less than one year at the University of Buckingham and will convey the same rights of practice in the UK for British and EU citizens.

During the last twenty years there has been a singular failure to recognise the role of “English Parallel” courses in medical schools in Central and Eastern Europe with growing numbers of British citizens qualifying in medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine.^{3,4} Most of these graduates have returned to work in the UK. This contrasts with the approach of countries, such as Norway, which endeavours to maintain formal links with its citizens training in other countries.⁵ As a result it can better plan the utilisation of such graduates. Indeed there is good reason to encourage bodies such as the GMC and the Centre for Workforce Intelligence to develop strategies to monitor the numbers of British citizens training outside of the UK. The introduction of some potential benefits to such students might encourage them to come forward and register centrally.

In both India and Australia the term “Made in China” is now commonly used in some parts of the press when discussing medical manpower. The purpose of this study was to assess the likelihood that the emergence of significant numbers of Chinese medical schools with English based training might, in the next decade, significantly add to the number of junior doctors seeking posts in the UK.

Methods

Under a Freedom of Information (F14/6537) request the General Medical Council was asked to provide details of registered practitioners from the following universities in China:

Nankai University
Xinjiang Medical University
Tianjin Medical University
Wenzhou Medical College

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