

Addressing Challenges for International Medical Graduates in Australia

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Unfortunately some overseas trained practitioners new to practice in Australia, may face some guarded or even negative views from your patients.



Some recent incidents involving overseas trained doctors have attracted considerable media interest. This has not helped quell the negativity towards overseas trained doctors. These incidents are regrettable, but be aware it may happen and it is often generally based on ignorance and fear of the unfamiliar.

For example, consider this consultation:

Hello, I'm Dr S, how can I help you?

Hi mate – I wanted to see a real doctor

I'm sorry, what do you mean?

I don't want to see someone from overseas; I want to see a proper Australian doctor.

I am the Registrar here and in charge of this clinic. I obtained my orthopaedic qualifications overseas and was required to undergo thorough credentialing here in Australia and successfully applied for this position 18 months ago. I am the right person to investigate your problems.

OK, I'm going to trust you.

You are in good hands. Now let me have a look at that elbow...

Strategies

Should this happen to you, it might be difficult, but remember:

- try not to be offended
- you may simply need to spend some more time to explain yourself and your situation in order to resolve any concerns or ignorance to provide the patient with some comfort
- remain professional and do not escalate the situation
- the patient does need your care and attention.

It is not possible to be liked by every patient all of the time. So some further explanation of your background should assist to diffuse the situation.

Resources

MIPS members can complete the [online risk education](#) unit International Healthcare Graduates (designed for healthcare practitioners new to Australia) to learn practical ways to deal with communication difficulties, prejudice and or in some rare cases , blatant racism.
