ECFMG policy, and the work of the WFME: their policy; our response

AAHCI European Regional Meeting, Berlin

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David Gordon
President, WFME
“Open your ears; for which of you will stop The vent of hearing when loud Rumour speaks?”

• Shakespeare, Henry IV part II
• (Der Zweyte Theil von König Heinrich dem Vierten)

• There are many rumours about the policy of ECFMG, and the work of WFME: most of them are wrong
• "WFME has given all regulatory powers in medical education to ECFMG, and this is going to prevent European doctors from practising outside Europe"

• "The requirement for Medical schools to be included in the World Directory of Medical Schools (an initiative of WHO, IMED & WFME) is that National Accreditation agencies must get accredited using WFME Guidelines where individual country’s Accreditation agencies determine what are Basic Standards and what constitute Quality improvement Standards”

• “WFME will only recognise an accrediting agency if all medical courses are modular”

• All nonsense and completely wrong
Structure of this talk

- A warning about misinformation!
- An introduction to the World Federation for Medical Education
- ECFMG statement about 2023
  - What it means, why was it done?
  - How it will be implemented
- WFME and accreditation
  - WHO – WFME guidelines
  - The recognition of accrediting agencies
- How the recognition programme works
- Progress of the recognition programme
About WFME

• Enhancing the quality of medical education worldwide
• In official relation with the World Health Organization (WHO) as the non-state actor representing medical education and medical schools worldwide
• Founded by the World Medical Association (WMA) and WHO (with others) in 1972

• WFME is primarily concerned with the quality, management, organisation and support of medical education. Our primary concern is not the detail of education: of what is taught in the programme of medical education or what educational methods and approaches are used.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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ECFMG to Require Medical School Accreditation for International Medical School Graduates Seeking Certification Beginning in 2023  

PHILADELPHIA, PA — The Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG®) has announced that, effective in 2023, physicians applying for ECFMG Certification will be required to graduate from a medical school that has been appropriately accredited. To satisfy this requirement, the physician’s medical school must be accredited through a formal process that uses criteria comparable to those established for U.S. medical schools by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) or that uses other globally accepted criteria, such as those put forth by the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME).
Mission

The charge of ECFMG is expressed in its mission statement:

“The ECFMG promotes quality health care for the public by certifying international medical graduates for entry into U.S. graduate medical education, and by participating in the evaluation and certification of other physicians and health care professionals nationally and internationally. In conjunction with its Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER), and other partners, it actively seeks opportunities to promote medical education through programmatic and research activities.”
How will “2023” be implemented?

This is entirely a matter for ECFMG, but we can say with confidence:

• There will be strong encouragement to meet the deadline
• The interests of students and recently qualified doctors will be paramount
• Implementation will be fair
WFME and ECFMG

WFME and Accreditation

• Related to our long-standing interest in quality of medical education
• A natural development from the WFME standards for medical education
• 2005: WHO and WFME agreed guidelines for accreditation of basic medical education
• 2010: ECFMG made its announcement “… accredited through a formal process that uses criteria … such as those put forth by the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME)”
• What we are doing is assessing if accrediting agencies are working at a good level
Why accreditation?

- Education is a social science: can we measure how well it is working?
- However, medical education can definitely be measured against the standards used locally for education.
- This is the accreditation of medical education.
- “To verify that medical schools are competent in the delivery of medical education, and that medical education programmes are suitable. This is to ensure that medical schools are educating doctors fit to serve the needs of the population they serve”
Choosing the right word

• Accrediting the accreditors/accrediting medical schools??

• Standards for medical education/standards for accreditation??

• Medical schools are accredited measured against standards for medical education

• Accrediting agencies are recognised using criteria for recognition
Choosing the right word (2)

• Accrediting the accreditors/accrediting medical schools??

• Standards for medical education/standards for accreditation??

• Medical schools are **accredited** measured against **standards** for medical education

• Accrediting agencies are **recognised** using **criteria** for recognition
Recognition Programme now

- Process using the model of accreditation
  - Medicine-specific
  - Self-evaluation
  - Site visit observation
  - Recognition Committee

- Pre-defined criteria
  - 2005 WHO/WFME policy on accreditation
  - Criteria based on an expert consensus of good practice
  - Updated 2018
Questions we are asked

• Have you turned anyone down?
• Surely you know that medical education in XXXXXXX is the best in the world and therefore does not need external assessment?
• Does the accrediting authority in my country have to come in for Recognition?
• When will ECFMG clarify its 2023 policy?
Progress of the Recognition Programme

• 13 agencies with recognition status
  - Large and small, rich and less-rich
  - Turkey and Georgia, Japan and the Sudan
• 8 agencies to complete the process over the next six months
  - Large and small, rich and less-rich
  - Brazil and UAE, Taiwan and Iran
• 22 further agencies in progress
  - Large and small, rich and less-rich
  - China and Cyprus, UK and Myanmar
“Quality Assurance in Medical Education in the 21st Century”

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