

## **HEALTH PROFESSIONS OFFICE**

### **Foreign Medical Schools**

Because of the current uncertainty about the future of U.S. residency programs, attending a foreign medical school should be done only as a last resort – after you are certain that you cannot be accepted by a U.S. allopathic or osteopathic medical school.

Until recently there were 144 residency positions for every 100 graduates of U.S. allopathic or osteopathic schools. Recently there has been a slight decrease to 140 positions. However, there is currently a lot of talk about cutting that number back to 110 with a target date of around 1999 or 2000.

Medicare expenses (Medicare pays for residency training programs) are currently under scrutiny (along with all government expenses) with Congress determined to achieve a balanced budget. Every major organization that is advising Congress agrees with the proposal to cut back to 110 residency slots. Among those that support the cut are the American Medical Association, the Association of American Medical Colleges, the American Medical Student Association, and the editorial boards of the most respected medical journals.

On the other hand, Congress proposed legislation (which was vetoed by Clinton) that would not cut residency slots but would save money by no longer paying for the residency training of non-U.S. citizens. This would make it very easy for U.S. citizens to obtain residency positions in this country, regardless of where they had gone to medical school. But not knowing what the final legislation will be, the future of U.S. citizens who receive their training in foreign medical schools is very uncertain.

You must be careful when those who have attended foreign medical schools in the past tell you about their experiences. For example, in the 70's large numbers of U.S. students studying in foreign medical schools were able to transfer to U.S. schools. The number of students who have successfully transferred since that time has been decreasing yearly. Of the many thousands of U.S. students attending foreign medical schools, only 87 students were able to transfer to a U.S. allopathic medical school (and the 87 were not all coming from foreign medical schools, many of those were transferring from U.S. osteopathic schools) for the 1994-1995 academic year. So don't plan on being able to transfer.

If you do decide to go the foreign route, there is a lot of valuable information in "Foreign Medical Schools for U.S. Citizens" by Carlos Pestana. There is also an audiotape of a talk that he gave in June of 1996. (Ask the Health Professions Office for these). Note that because medical school faculty are well-educated people, most schools can advertise that the instruction is in English. However, the patients you will be treating will be treating will not be as well-educated so you will have to learn the language of the country before you start your clinical training.

The three best foreign medical schools (in spite of how good they are, never go to one if you can possibly get into a U.S. school) that accept U.S. students are:

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS (in Dublin, Ireland)

SACKLER SCHOOL OF MEDICINE (in Tel Aviv, Israel)

TUORO COLLEGE/FACULTY OF MEDICINE OF THE TECHINION-ISREAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (in Haifa, Israel)