



**International Medical Workforce Collaborative Conference
Edinburgh, Scotland, 16th – 20th September 2008**

Guideline - Self Sufficiency & IMGs session

Lead Country: Canada

Overview

The following provides a guide to preparing your paper for the *Self Sufficiency and International Medical Graduates (IMGs)* session. As a guide, we suggest that each of the papers for the *Self Sufficiency and IMGs* session cover the following sections: overview, background, focus and research questions, discussion of the findings and issues for the future.

Background

A self-sufficient medical workforce that can meet the needs of its population is a critical consideration for all countries. Self-sufficiency is partly dependent on the supply and distribution of physicians which in turn relates to the training system, recruitment and retention. But self-sufficiency goes beyond sheer numbers; increasing interest is being paid by planners and regulators to how roles and scopes of practice for the various health professionals are defined, to enable them to work collaboratively in an optimal fashion.

In the face of workforce shortages, countries have sometimes focused their planning strategies more on bolstering numbers rather than maximizing the efficiency of *how* the health professions work together. In doing so, some have relied on recruiting International Medical Graduates (IMGs) and other internationally trained workers. This raises several questions including ethical ones, as well as with respect to countries' ability to integrate IMGs into training and practice given limited financial, physical and human resources.

In the face of workforce shortages experienced in many countries and given the evolving roles and scopes of practice of many health professions, a fuller exploration of the notion of self-sufficiency and how it can be achieved is required.

Focus and Research Questions

1. Define self-sufficiency, whether it be theoretically, empirically, or through a policy-focus
2. Suggest possible measures by which the attainment of self-sufficiency can be assessed
3. What ethical framework can be developed to manage the recruitment of IMGs and the repatriation of nationals working abroad, without interfering with the free movement of people in an increasingly "globalized" world?
4. Present a demand model or summarize approaches to demand modeling in your country within the context of determining the requirements for self-sufficiency.

References

http://rcpsc.medical.org/publicpolicy/physician-resources/Workforce-Self-sufficiency_e.pdf

(others to be developed)

Specific Directions

1. Is the education system compatible with the need for a self-sufficient workforce? How have the number of undergraduate and postgraduate trainees evolved and are these the right numbers?
2. Contextualize self-sufficiency within the situation in your country – what are the stock and flows of physicians?

3. What are the various measures and tactics that have been adopted to achieve self-sufficiency in your country, if any?
4. What strategies, if any, have been adopted to link short-term workforce planning strategies with the long-term objective of striving towards self-sufficiency? If none, what approaches would you suggest?
5. Are there regional disparities in medical workforce distribution, particularly in rural/remote areas, that have resulted in inter-regional or international “poaching”?
6. What measures have been taken to optimize the scopes of practice of the various health professions to increase the self-sufficiency of your country's health workforce?
7. Identify strategies to ensure optimal use of the medical workforce through the various stages of their careers (e.g. late-career initiatives)
8. When providing IMG data, provide a breakdown foreign nationals who are trained internationally and recruited to the country as compared to nationals who are trained internationally.
9. What means have been adopted to integrate IMGs into the educational and practice environments in your country?
10. How have immigration regulations and patterns in your country impacted on the flow of trainees and fully qualified doctors?
11. What prognosis can you offer in terms of the likelihood of achieving self-sufficiency and what approaches/priorities can you recommend?

