

IMGs in Psychiatry: Driving Improvement in Support and Training

Authors: Dr Ann Gollo (CT2)¹, Dr Mahmoud Odeh (CT3)¹, Dr Dineka Gray (Consultant Psychiatrist)¹, Dr Indira Vinjamuri (Consultant Psychiatrist)¹

Aims and Hypothesis

- This project aimed to design and implement a structured support model for International Medical Graduates (IMGs) in Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust.
- We hypothesised that a peer-led, culturally informed support programme would improve early adaptation to the NHS, reduce transition-related anxiety, and enhance timely engagement with training and portfolio requirements.

Background

- IMGs face multiple challenges when relocating to the United Kingdom, including navigating unfamiliar NHS systems, understanding GMC expectations, completing essential administrative tasks, securing accommodation, and adjusting to new professional and cultural norms.
- These pressures can delay progress with portfolio documentation, WPBAs, and ARCP preparation. To address these barriers, a structured IMG support programme was established within the trust.

Methods

- The programme comprised four components:
 1. A structured IMG sessions were delivered twice per semester: an induction session at rotation start, and a mid-placement catch-up addressing emerging needs and relocation guidance.
 2. One-to-one support was available throughout the year for portfolio queries, relocation challenges, examination preparation, and cultural/workplace concerns.
 3. Communication skills sessions are hosted for each new cohort, with an emphasis on key psychiatric skills
 4. Practical tools, including an induction resource and Address Change Checklist, were also provided.

Results

- Feedback (albeit informal thus far) indicates that IMGs experienced faster adaptation to trust processes and deanery expectations, reduced anxiety around administrative and accommodation issues, earlier engagement with training requirements, greater confidence in navigating WPBAs and portfolios, and improved social integration.
- Peer-buddy uptake was encouraging. Due to positive feedback so far, surveys will now be sent to IMGs for feedback after each support session.

Conclusions

- This peer-led programme improved IMG wellbeing, confidence and training engagement.
- Future directions include expanding peer mentoring, creating video modules, strengthening collaboration with regional IMG networks, and undertaking formal evaluation using pre- and post-intervention confidence measures.
- No external funding was received.

Contact Information:

Dr Ann Gollo (CT2)- Ann.Gollo@merseycare.nhs.uk