

Home or abroad? Exploring medical students' attitudes towards studying and working overseasSaw Ohn Mar ^{*1} , Fatehpal Singh Malhi² , Hakim Gharib Bilal² , Syed Rahim SyedHamid² , Osman Ali³ 

1- Surgical based Department, Faculty of Medicine, Universiti Kuala Lumpur
Royal College of Medicine Perak, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia. ,

sawohnmar@unikl.edu.my

2- Surgical based Department, Faculty of Medicine, Universiti Kuala Lumpur
Royal College of Medicine Perak, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia.

3- Community based Department, Faculty of Medicine, Universiti Kuala
Lumpur Royal College of Medicine Perak, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia.

Abstract: (3363 Views)

Background & Objective: Cross-border medical student mobility and doctor migration have become global trends. The aim of this study was to explore Malaysian medical students' attitudes towards studying and working overseas.

Materials & Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted among medical students of the academic year 2018–2019 from University Kuala Lumpur, Royal College of Medicine Perak, using a self-administered validated questionnaire that explored their opinions related to encouraging and deterring factors of studying and working overseas and their preferred destination for migration. All 569 students from years 1 to 5 were invited, and 505 completed responses were analyzed.


Results: Financial factors were rated as most relevant for not studying overseas by 81.6% of the respondents, whereas language barriers and racial discrimination were considered less relevant. Doing electives overseas was favored by 68.9%. Regarding the benefits of further study abroad, learning international standards and experiencing diversity are rated as “very important” by 75.4% and 62.7%, respectively. They rated better earning (63.2%) and further learning (30.7%) as the most relevant reasons for doctors working overseas, and family commitment (49.9%), Medical Licensing Examinations (MLE) (38.4%), and loyalty to their home country (34.7%) for not working overseas. Their most preferred foreign destinations for further study and working are the UK, Ireland, and Australia.

Conclusion: While appreciating the advantages of further study abroad, MLE was considered one of the deterring factors. As a result, consideration should be given to making changes to existing curricula to align with the expected standards of the destined countries.

Keywords: attitude, medical students, malaysian, studying overseas, working abroad

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