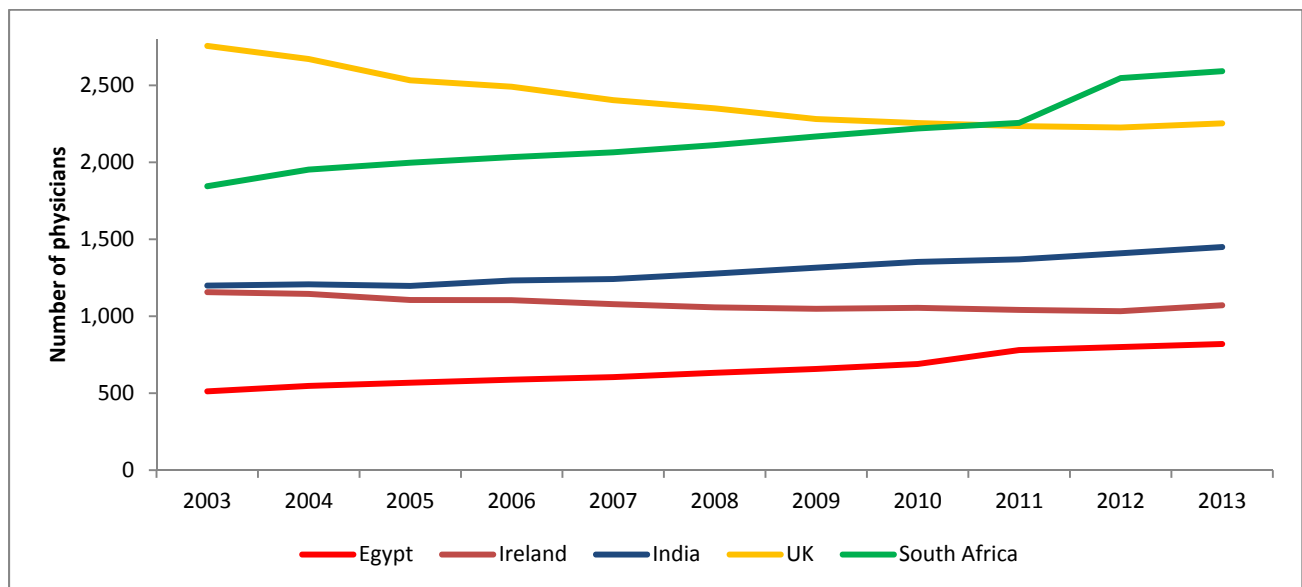


What countries produce Canada's International Medical Graduates?

Recently released counts of active physicians in Canada shows that almost one out of every four doctors (24%) received their medical degree from another country. The highest proportion of international medical graduates (IMGs) occurs in Saskatchewan (54%) and Newfoundland (41%). For decades, these two provinces have relied heavily on IMGs to service their more rural and remote areas. IMGs do not always remain in the areas to which they are recruited and often move to urban centres once they have fulfilled their return of service obligations, typically 3-5 years. This means the recruitment cycle begins again.

Traditionally, Canada has relied heavily on graduates of the United Kingdom, India and other Commonwealth countries. However, there has been a shift in the incoming flow. For example, in 1996, 25% of all IMGs practising in Canada were from the United Kingdom (UK) compared to representing only 3% today. The number of IMGs from the UK practising in Canada fell from 3,679 to 2,253 during that period, due to retirement of those who arrived in Canada decades earlier and also because of fewer new physicians arriving from the UK.

Graph 1: Number of active physicians in Canada by place of MD graduation - top 5 countries



During the 1990's, physicians from South Africa were actively recruited for Saskatchewan and Newfoundland and their numbers in the practising pool have increased from 1,209 in 1996 to 2,592 in 2013. Canada was criticized internationally for actively recruiting from a country that desperately needed to retain its doctors for their own citizens. Possibly as a result of this pressure, there has been a decrease in physicians arriving from South Africa each year. In

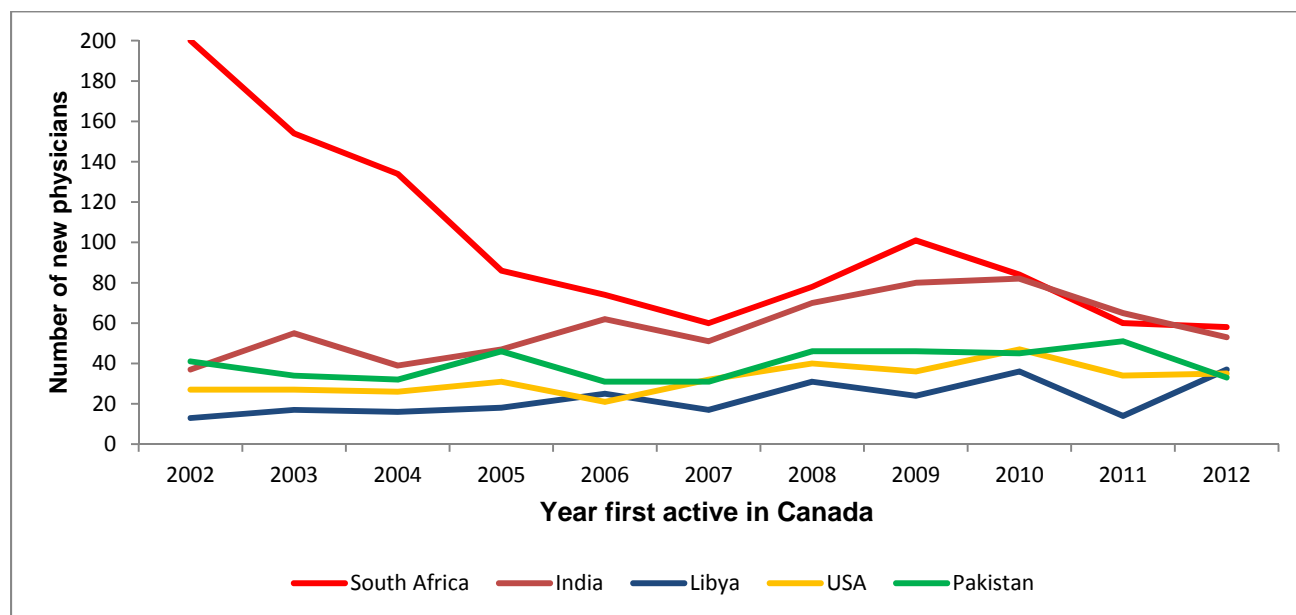
2002, there were 200 new South African physicians that became licensed in Canada compared to 58 in 2012. They do, however, remain the largest supplier of new physicians.

India continues to be a significant source of IMGs with about 60 physicians arriving each year and a total of 1,731 in practice in 2013, up from 1,306 in practice in 1996.

The current top five suppliers of physicians new to Canada based on new arrivals in 2012 are: South Africa (58), India (53), Libya (37), USA (36), and Pakistan (33). In the case of the USA, some of these doctors may well have been raised in Canada but self-funded their medical education in the USA either by choice or after being rejected by Canadian medical schools. *[There are a limited number of undergraduate positions available and about 5 qualified applicants for each¹].*

Canadians also study abroad in Ireland and while the numbers setting up practice each year in Canada have been around 20, these numbers may well increase as larger graduating cohorts compete for postgraduate training positions in Canada [separate stream from Canadian graduates]. This will lead to eligibility for full licensure and mobility within our country.

Graph 2: Number of new IMGs to Canada – top 5 countries of MD graduation



While the magnitude of physicians arriving each year (25-30) does not place Nigeria in the top 5, doctors with MD degrees from this country now total 339 of active physicians in Canada compared to 53 in 1996, a six fold increase. Iraq also showed a 6 fold increase with 25-30 new physicians each year. Iran is another solid supplier and has three times the number of active physicians in Canada as it did in 1996.

¹ 2012 Canadian Medical Education Statistics, AFMC.

So Commonwealth nations continue to comprise the biggest groups of countries among currently practising physicians in Canada but other countries like Libya, USA, Iran and Iraq are now contributing significantly to the new IMGs arrivals.

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July, 2013