

Dr Sayed Hashemi



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Submission No. 104

(Overseas Trained Doctors)

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House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Health and Ageing
Parliament House, Canberra.

Subject: Inquiry into Registration Processes and Support for Overseas Trained Doctors

I am an overseas doctor who has successfully passed all the requirements for registration as a doctor in Australia -the Occupational English Test (OET), MCQ and AMC Clinical examinations - however due to changes in the registration process I have been prevented from perusing my profession. I am therefore writing to appeal to you to consider my situation.

As of July 1st 2007, the NSW Medical Board required overseas trained doctors to pass the OET before progressing onto the AMC Clinical and MCQ examinations. Also, the OET would not be considered if it was achieved more than two years at the time of applying for placement. This is where I was severely disadvantaged as it meant that my OET success was now 'expired'. I had completed all exams in March 2007, before the change in policy was introduced.

I am an Australian citizen who has lived in Australia for several years (i.e. 19 years). Inevitably, living here I have adopted the Australian culture, interact daily with English speaking community and taking in English media. Currently, I am working at Douglas Hanly Moir Pathology as well as using my spare time as a Doctor observer in a GP clinic. Therefore I believe my language skills, understanding and appreciation for the Australian culture and have deepened rather than gone backwards or 'expired'.

Furthermore, I would like to point out that the AMC booklet describing the AMC Clinical examination clearly states that the exam is designed to **not only test the medical knowledge of candidates but also focuses on language and communication skills and the ability to counsel and interact effectively with patients**. These exams are conducted by senior Australian doctors and professors who judge the candidates on all aspects including their communication skills. Surely if my language skills were inadequate and unacceptable to these examiners I would not have been able to pass this exam.

At a time when there is a severe doctor shortage across Australia, some health authorities are recruiting doctors from overseas on temporary work visas solely on the basis of their English skills. These doctors have done neither the AMC exams nor a bridging course. I have completed a bridging course at the University of NSW in 2003 and at Monash University in 2006. It seems unfair and illogical that these doctors are considered acceptable but those such as I who has gone through all the appropriate exams and bridging courses are prevented from practicing.

I am prepared, willing and eager to take up positions in rural and regional areas of Australia where there is a great need for medical professionals and would be very grateful for the opportunity to do so.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely

Dr. Sayed Hashemi