

BRIDGE Newsletter

INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED MEDICAL DOCTORS (ITMDs)

VOL.2, SPRING 2018

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Message from the Co-Founder and Program Manager/Lead, ITMD Bridging Program, Ryerson University

The Internationally Trained Medical Doctors (ITMD) Bridging Program, offered through Ryerson University's G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education, provides the skills and competencies for highly educated and experienced ITMDs to gain employment in health research and health sector management positions in Canada as an alternative to clinical practice. The program provides Canadian context in the areas of health research methodology, health care project management, health informatics, data management, health professional communication, culture and leadership, multidisciplinary research, and management training through academic content and institutional practicum placements.

Since Ryerson University's ITMD Bridging Program began just three years ago, it has achieved outstanding success. Competition for admission to the program is extremely intense, with more than 600 applications received to date. 106 students have been trained by the program with an additional 24 students currently studying in Cohort 7. We are extremely proud of the program's diversity; our program's graduates represent more than 33 countries around the world. Over 80% of our graduates have successfully transition into positions in the non-licensed health sector or are pursuing further studies in higher education. We have just completed our MCI-funded evidence-based ITMDs roadmap research project, which engaged more than 130 ITMDs and stakeholders to identify alternative career pathways for ITMDs.

Through 12 weeks of required coursework and (non-paid, minimum of 8 week) practicum placements, the ITMD



Dr. Shafi U. Bhuiyan

Bridging Program provides its student with training to transition into non-licensed health sector employment. The program's alumni continue to make meaningful impacts in the health sector. Recently, the program received funding from the Government of Ontario for the scale-up and expansion until 2021. This program continues to gain momentum and we are excited to witness its growth in the years to come.

As the ITMDs Bridging Program's co-founder and program manager/lead, I am excited to continue the positive momentum that the program has gained since it began in Winter 2015. I would also like to extend my heartiest thanks to senior management of The Chang School, specifically Dean Marie Bountrogianni; the program's committed support partners; colleagues in the Gateway for International Professionals program area; and the ITMD program staff for their continued support towards the success of the ITMD program.

Roadmap for ITMDs: Evidence-based Study

This research project, funded by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI), was conducted to gather evidence to develop a roadmap towards increasing access to non-licensed health sector employment for Internationally Trained Medical Doctors (ITMDs) as an alternative to medical licensing in Canada.

The study's preliminary results indicate the need for multi-sectoral changes in policies, practices, and availability of resources at the individual, organizational, and systems levels. Although

strategies that address individual ITMDs can contribute to individual capacity building, it is critical to incorporate organizational and systems-level strategies to facilitate the transition of ITMDs into alternative employment in the non-licensed health sector. It is critical to build on and scale-up strategies and interventions that have shown to be effective, feasible, and viable. The Internationally Trained Medical Doctors (ITMD) Bridging Program at Ryerson University is one example of an intervention to foster individual as well as organizational capacity

building. During its pilot phase, the program demonstrated its ability to equip students with skills that help them transition into employment.

Thus, scale up and expansion of this model to meet the increasing demand for this type of collaborative program could be highly effective. Finally, one of the key lessons learned from this research project is the need for multi-level, collaborative solutions to address unemployment and underemployment of ITMDs.

ITMD Participants

The Internationally Trained Medical Doctors (ITMD) Bridging Program has successfully trained 106 ITMDs. Moreover, another 24 internationally trained medical professionals are currently enrolled in the ITMD program. All participants are of diverse backgrounds and originate from 33 countries.

YEAR	COHORT	COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
ITMD Cohorts 1 – 6 (Pilot Program)			
2015	1	10	14 (Males: 5/Females: 9)
	2	11	14 (Males: 8/Females: 6)
2016	3	11	19 (Males: 12/Females: 7)
	4	10	20 (Males: 8/Females: 12)
2017	5	11	18 (Males: 7/Females: 11)
	6	16	21 (Males: 10/Females: 11)
ITMD/MCI Cohort 1			
2018	1	14	24 (Males: 12/Females: 12)

Alumni Inspirations – Ovwé Sowho, Cohort 5

Ovwé Sowho is a medical doctor and public health professional with experience in international development, quality improvement, clinical trial management, and project management. She holds a Master of Public Health in Policy and Management from Columbia University in New York. Ovwé has extensive experience in managing multi-million dollar national and international clinical trials within the pharmaceutical industry. She has also been involved in safety and pharmacovigilance of new drugs and medical devices, as well as safety reporting to the FDA. Her interest in public health and international development led her to establish Ovoteri, an organization dedicated to improving quality of health and education in developing countries taking on projects with social impact. She was recognized by the Lagos State Government for her contribution in supporting the state department by educating secondary school children about Ebola virus during the outbreak in Nigeria. The Internationally Trained Medical Doctors (ITMD) Bridging Program helped her fill the gap in her Canadian education and work experience and served as a bridge to help her meet her professional development aspirations.



Ovwé is currently working with the College of Family Physicians of Canada on a pan-Canadian initiative to improve patient care at the frontlines using quality improvement science, data, and research. She is also involved in mentoring secondary school children in Canada and Nigeria and is leading change in community development initiatives particularly in promoting arts and culture in Toronto.

Alumni Inspirations – Jorge Telchi, Cohort 6

Jorge Telchi is an internationally trained medical doctor and architect who is originally from Bolivia. After graduating from medical school, he served as a family physician and research assistant. In 2013, he moved to Toronto and worked as a volunteer diabetes program facilitator and educator. Despite his qualifications and experience, Jorge found it challenging to gain meaningful employment in the Canadian healthcare system. He was interested in the field of health informatics and eventually landed a job as a data support specialist at Cota – a community-based organization that supports adults with mental health and cognitive challenges. While looking for courses to enhance his skill set, he found the Internationally Trained Medical Doctors (ITMD) Bridging Program and was impressed by the curriculum and the academic standards that Ryerson University is known for. Jorge attributes his success to the continuous support that he received from the faculty and cherishes the friendships he made along the way. Soon after graduating, he completed his practicum at St. Michael's Hospital and was offered a position as a research assistant. Jorge is enthusiastic about taking on new challenges and growing and contributing to the health sector in Ontario.



OUR SUPPORT PARTNERS



Participants' Reflections – Ayesah Mohiuddin, Cohort 5

Ayesah G.Mohiuddin graduated from the School of Medicine at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland - Bahrain campus. Following her graduation, she worked as a medical intern at King Hamad University Hospital and as a Research Analyst at SBI Pharmaceuticals Co., Ltd. Upon completing her internship in Bahrain, she moved back to Toronto. Despite her strong credentials, her years away from Toronto served as an obstacle for her to transition into the Canadian healthcare workforce.



Ayesah decided to join the Internationally Trained Medical Doctors (ITMD) Bridging Program in April of 2017. This program proved to be the gateway she desired to re-enter the Canadian healthcare workforce. She completed her practicum at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), the largest epicentre of mental health treatment and research in Canada. During her practicum, she actively contributed to the research on the use of Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation in Autism Spectrum Disorders. She then worked at GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) as a clinical support lead in Clinical Development, supporting the vaccine zoster project. Ayesah currently works as a research assistant at the Neurogenetics Section at CAMH supporting the IMPACT study and other related studies. She aspires to pursue her post-graduate training in Community Health with a focus in Addictions and Mental Health.

ITMDs' Selected Publications

Bhuiyan, S., and Tahsin, F. (2017). "Maternal and Child Health in Bangladesh: Transitioning from MDGs to SDGs." *International Journal of Current Research*, 9 (5), 49982-49993.

Bhuiyan, S. (2017). "[Technical Brief]: Piloting MCH Handbook for increasing women's knowledge on maternal and child health in Bangladesh." *JICA Technical Brief, JICA, Tokyo. Issue 13*. Retrieved from http://open_jicareport.jica.go.jp/pdf/1000032953_03.pdf

Dehal, N., Krishan, K., Singh, A., and Kanchan, T. (2016). "Tracking a female foetus: Preventing gender imbalance in India." *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*. 44(8), 742-743. DOI: 10.1177/1403494816670267

Lassi, Z., Musavi, N. B., Maliqi, B., Mansoor, N., Francisco, A., Toure, K., and Bhutta, Z. (2016). "Systematic review on human resources for health interventions to improve maternal health outcomes: evidence from low- and middle-income countries." *Human Resources for Health*, 14(10),1-20. DOI: 10.1186/s12960-016-0106-y

Dehal, N., Krishan, K., Kanchan, T., and Singh, J. (2016). "Strategies for effective tobacco control in countries with world's largest tobacco users: What more is needed?." *Perspectives in Public Health*. 136(1), 16-17. DOI: 10.1177/1757913915616735

Bhuiyan, S. (2015). "[A Handbook]: The Global Impact of the Maternal and Child Health." *UN Special Magazine, WHO*. (749), 14-15.

Mokhtarinejad, F., Roozbahany, N.A., and Ajami, M. (2015). "Bilateral Hearing Loss Following Unilateral Stapes Surgery." *Journal of Hearing Sciences and Otolaryngology*, 1 (1), 25-28.

Lassi, Z., Aftab, W., Ariff, S., Kumar, R., Hussain, I., Musavi, N. B., Memon, Z., Soofi, S., and Bhutta, Z. (2015). "Impact of service provision platforms on maternal and newborn health in conflict areas and their acceptability in Pakistan: a systematic review." *Conflict and Health* 9(25), 1-12. DOI: 10.1186/s13031-015-0054-5

Khajavi, M., Roozbahany, N.A., and Afshar, R. V. (2015). "Nasal and Paranasal Sinuses Anatomical Variations in Patients with and without Chronic Rhinosinusitis." *Journal of Hearing Sciences and Otolaryngology*. 1(1), 13-20.

Roy, M., Harris, J., Afreen, S., Deak, E., Gade, L., Balajee, S.A., Park, B., Chiller, T., and Luby, S. (2012). "Aflatoxin contamination in food commodities in Bangladesh," *Food Additives and Contaminants: Part B*: 6(1), 17-23. DOI: 10.1080/19393210.2012.720617.



ITMD Program 3rd Year Celebration Event with Dr. Peter D. Donnelly, President and CEO, Public Health Ontario (December 2017)

Related Events



PEGASUS Conference

April 27-29, 2018

University of Toronto, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Website: pegasusconference.ca



Public Health 2018

May 28-31, 2018

Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Website: cpa.ca/publichealth2018



Canadian Conference on Global Health - Fragile Environments and Global Health: Examining Drivers of Change

November 19-21, 2018

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Website: csih.org/en/events/canadian-conference-global-health



Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Handbook Conference

December 12-14, 2018

Bangkok, Thailand

Website: mchhandbook.com/conferences-on-the-mch-handbook/

ITMDs Canadian Network (ICaN)

The ITMDs Canadian Network (ICaN) is a volunteer networking forum for internationally trained medical doctors (ITMDs) in Canada to provide mentorship in post-graduate training excellence, professional development, global public health education, health research management, and career coaching.

Successful participants of The G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education's ITMD Bridging Program, with a passion to nurture the aspirations of newcomers to the Canadian healthcare system, volunteer to support this initiative.

ICaN aims to provide a platform for a diverse group of ITMDs with a vision to empower them in Canada to be beacons of leadership and professional excellence. ICaN's strategic priorities are embedded in five pillars: capacity building and training; mentorship and leadership; outreach and

volunteering; global health education and Research; and evidence-based practice and policy influence.

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CASSA's Leadership Award 2018

In May 2018, Dr. Shafi Bhuiyan was recognized with the Leadership Excellence in Civic Engagement award by the Canadian South Asian Association for both the MCH handbook program, which empowers women both locally and globally, and the ITMD Bridging Program, which assists ITMDs as they integrate into Ontario's healthcare workforce.