

# International Medical Graduates in the National Residency Match Game

I read the article by Hartman and colleagues entitled “A Narrative Review of the Evidence Supporting Factors Used by Residency Program Directors to Select Applicants for Interviews”<sup>1</sup> with great interest and would like to highlight some of my own views as an international medical graduate (IMG).

The authors’ analysis might not reflect the decisions residency program directors make concerning IMGs. The Medical Student Performance Evaluations (MSPEs) obtained by IMGs are usually not held to the same standard as the ones used by US medical schools, and the Electronic Residency Application Service provides the option to skip it.<sup>2</sup>

With recent changes in immigration, many applicants have observed that visa status has become an important factor when matching. The 2018 data provided by the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP)<sup>3</sup> showed that in order to match, the average United States Medical Licensing Examination Step 1 and Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK) score must be 222 and 232 for US IMGs, and 234 and 240 for non-US IMGs, respectively. Family medicine is one of the specialties that has recorded a higher number of US IMGs matching compared with non-US IMGs (744 versus 369). The bias over visa status might be even worse as green card holders are currently being categorized as non-US IMG by the Match data.<sup>3</sup>

I strongly agree with the authors’ assessment on the importance of scores. Step 1 and Step 2 CK scores are 2 very important decisive factors for an IMG. The 2018 NRMP data have shown a rise in the odds of matching with increasing scores for IMGs. The need for a higher score has been an important drive for IMGs to work harder to improve their knowledge to be on par with many US medical schools and has provided program directors with a good measure of an applicant’s ability to adapt to curricula set by national boards.

I appreciate the work done by Hartman and colleagues, and would like to encourage IMGs to identify additional obstacles that they have to face for the Match.

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## References

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2. Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates. ERAS Support Services for Applicants. <https://www.ecfmg.org/eras/applicants-documents-index.html> Accessed June 13, 2019.
3. National Resident Matching Program. Main Residency Match Data and Reports. <http://www.nrmp.org/main-residency-match-data>. Accessed June 13, 2019.