Australia is a multicultural country and as such recruits doctors from everywhere in the world. European doctors (except from United Kingdom) are initially somewhat disadvantaged being unfamiliar with the Commonwealth structure/training and by the problem of language accent and proficiency. OTDs who apply for a permanent residency status have to sit the written part of the Australia Medical Council (AMC) exams before being allowed to work in Australia as doctors. These exams require extensive preparation and are quite expensive. However, many OTDs are currently recruited on a temporary visa condition (occupational training visa, skill shortage visa, general practitioner visa) that is supported by a completely different judicial and political frame. Employment on a temporary visa can be facilitated individually through a Locum Service. All these OTDs are entitled only to limited or conditional registration with the Medical Board. Their visa condition depends largely onto their employer; currently they are allowed to work in Australia for a period up to four years.

My overall experience of working in Australia is a positive one. I have learned to work in a multidisciplinary team, which is very different to my European experience. I became less biased but also more critical with societal and political interpretations and I learned a lot about clinical governance and economic implications. I have seen so many disease patterns (multicultural in all aspects) that I only knew from text books, psychiatric as well as about Aboriginals and Torres Straight Islanders with their spiritual belief system which is so contrary to westernized society. In summary ‘everything’ is much tougher if an MD from abroad applies for a full registered professional medical job in Australia. All colleagues do face exams after a certain period of time and all exams are very time consuming and costly particularly if English is not the first language.

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