

Cultural Integration Group (CIG): A Trust-Wide QI Pilot Project for International Medical Graduate Resident Doctors

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INTRODUCTION

'International medical graduate' (IMG) is defined as a doctor practising medicine in a country different to their country of primary medical qualification.¹ Evidence shows differences in attainment for this cohort.

In 2023, 68% of new UK doctors IMG with only 41% progressing in their careers without issues. Workforce retention remains a challenge with 40% of IMGs likely to move abroad².

IMGs are twice as likely to be reported to the General Medical Council, experience racism and discrimination, and achieve lower pass rates in qualification exams.³ Such factors notably impact their mental health and well-being, which can ripple effect into patient care and safety outcomes.

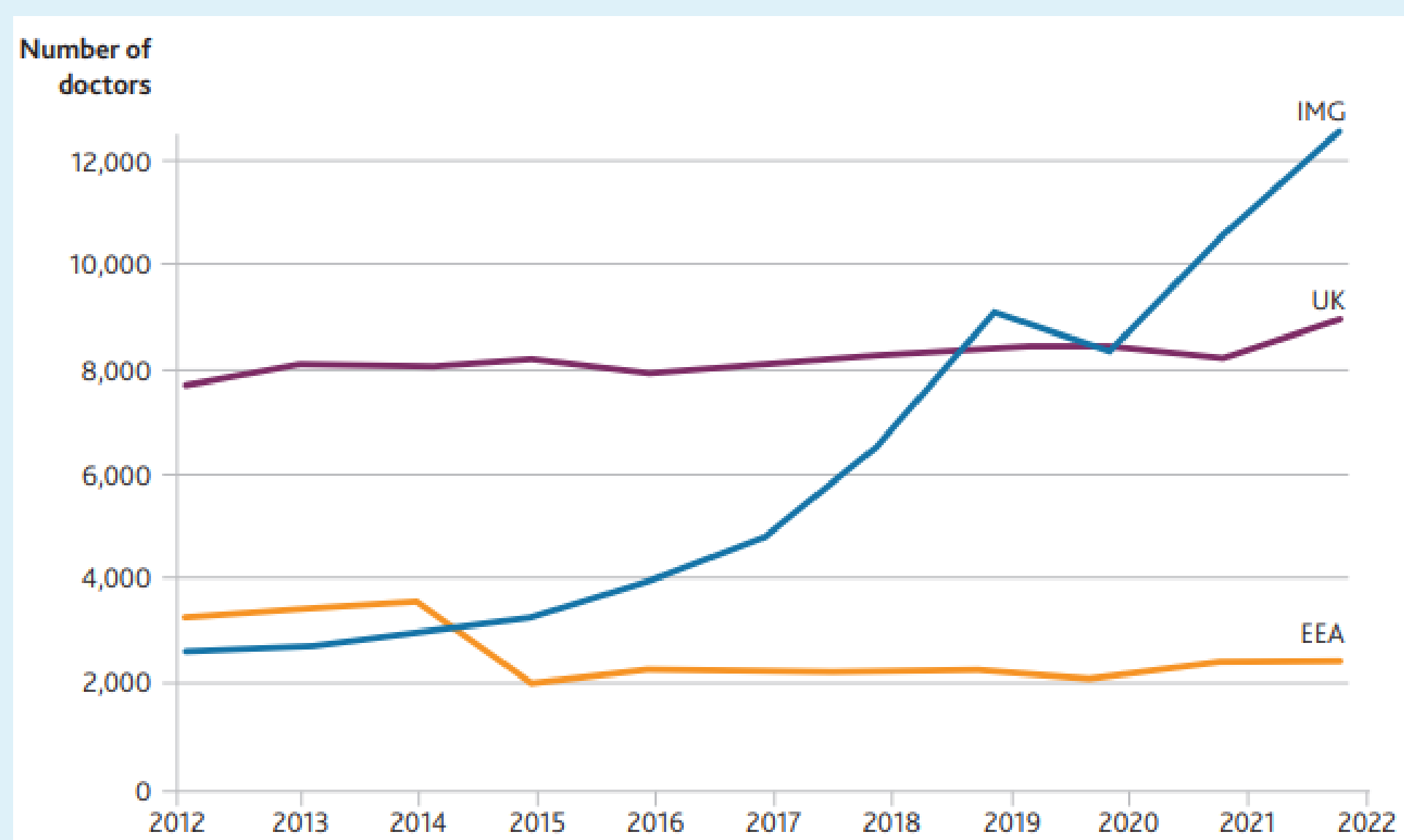


Figure 1. Doctors joining the workforce, by primary medical qualification region per year.²

AIMS & METHODOLOGY

This QIP was designed in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Leadership and Management Fellowship Scheme 2024-2025. Its aims and methodology are guided by the 'SMART' goal framework:

S: To develop a supportive and confidential space exclusive to IMG resident doctors within AWP in identifying non-clinical issues at work whilst engaging in reflective and culturally-sensitive discussions.

M: Pre and post-interventional Likert-scale surveys will be distributed to measure confidence and perspectives on integration within the NHS. Additionally, there is potential to obtain qualitative data through a semi-structured interview for attendees present in ≥ 3 CIG sessions.

A: 50-minute sessions are facilitated by a senior non-Consultant IMG on MS Teams. Each session is steered by a non-clinical case presented by an attendee on an allocated topic, examples of which may include: linguo-cultural variations, navigating team dynamics, and recognising burnout.

R: IMGs often face barriers in adaptation and acculturation that hinder their well-being and performance. A degree of compassionate curiosity about IMGs, appreciating their diversity and strengths can only lead to better patient care and a happier workforce.⁴

T: Ten sessions are offered throughout the 1-year pilot project.

RESULTS

As of April 2025, three sessions have been held with a total of 11 participants. It is noted that an IMG with less than 12 months work experience has not yet attended a session.

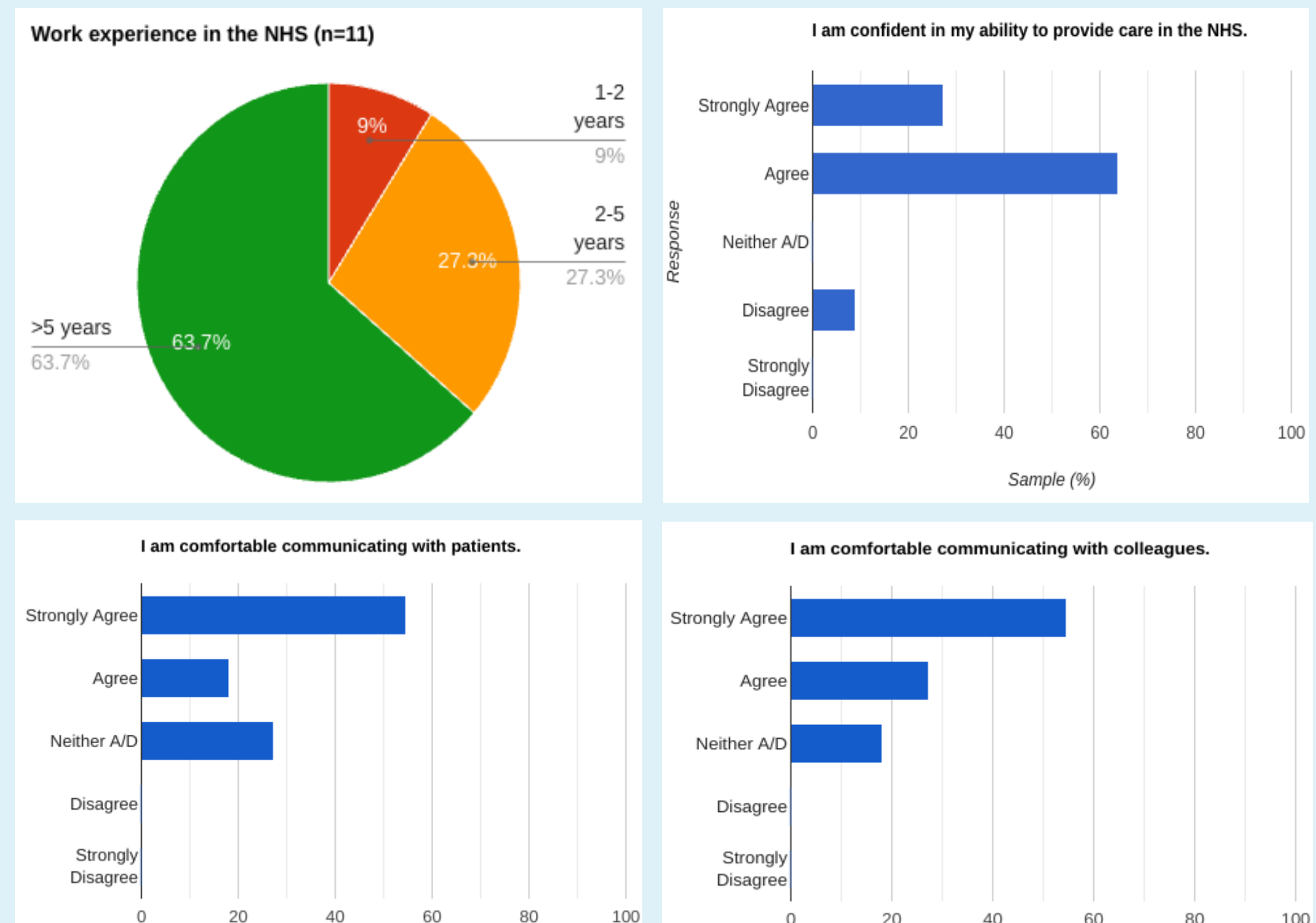


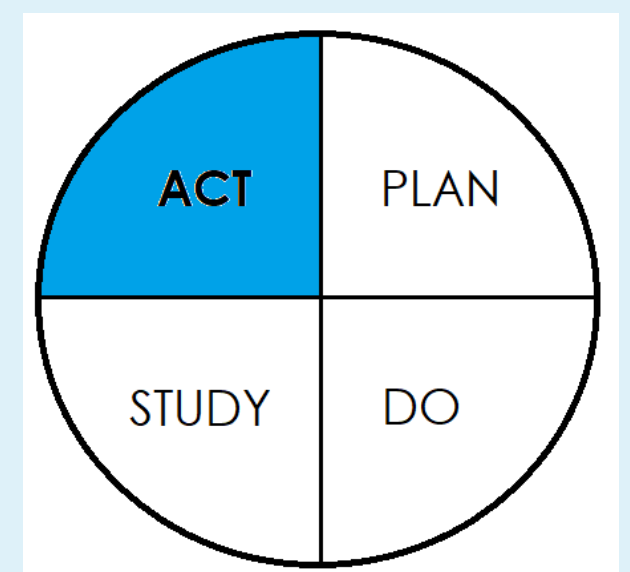
Figure 2 (upper left). Work experience of current participants in the NHS.

Figure 3 (upper right), Figure 4 (lower left), Figure 5 (lower right). Pre-survey questionnaire items.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The first cycle will be completed by December 2025, with the view to feedback findings to relevant stakeholders.

Through the PDSA model, issues will be logged, including barriers to participation, perceived usefulness of the sessions, and weighing in on the feasibility of a second cycle—all of which would help inform the learning part of the final report.



Inter-Trust collaboration and the inclusion of new IMG Consultants in order to expand the sample will be considered. Lastly, the common themes that would emerge from the sessions may be utilised as potential drivers into developing further advocacy initiatives for IMGs.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Volunteer Facilitators: Dr Ahmed Negm and Dr Sehen Kebra-Selassie (SAS)
Administration: AWP Medical Education

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