

A Closer Look at Iranian Migration to the United States

Dear Editor,

I read with interest the article by Ronaghy and Shajari regarding the migration of Iranian physicians to the United States in the post revolution era.¹ There are some important findings in this study about brain drain in Iran. Although there was a rebound in the number of immigrants in 1990s, there was also a sharp decline in the latter half of the first decade of the third millennium. This needs a careful discussion. Some of this trend might be related to more restriction on immigration of Iranian physicians from US side. As mentioned correctly, the destination of migration might have changed from US to other western countries including Canada and Australia. However, more opportunities for specialty training and more stable professional opportunities for specialists may also have some impacts on the trend of physicians' migration.

Some mistakes are also modifiable in this article. According to the Iranian medical council, the total number of licensed physicians now exceeds 130,000. Based on this number and the data in table one, the percentage of licensed physicians migrated from Iran in the post revolution era would be around 3%. If one considers only those graduated in the post revolution era, the percentage would be 2%. The time of Cultural Revolution leading to closure of universities was in late April 1980 not in 1986 as mentioned in the text. Some of the references are not arranged properly in the text (reference number 9).

It should be emphasized that brain drain is an important issue

in countries like Iran. The administration process, educational content and environment, the post graduate employment opportunities, job satisfaction, as well as social and political environment among others have effect on this process.² The government should improve the working condition of elites in all fields especially in medicine rather than restricting the migration.

Conflict of Interest: *KBL was the minister of health and medical education of Islamic republic of Iran between 2005 till 2009.*

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