

MALAYSIA

MMA believes screening will stop influx of medical grads

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Malaysian Medical Association believes the housemanship screening is necessary as there are too many medical graduates. - The Malaysian Insider file pic, December 30, 2015.

The new requirement for medical graduates to undergo interviews with the Public Service Commission before getting housemanship offers is necessary to stem the influx of graduates from the many private medical degree programmes, says the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA).

MMA president Dr Ashok Zachariah Philip today said in the last decade, the Higher Education Ministry had granted licences for an unprecedented number of private medical degree programmes.

This, he said, had not been carried out properly as there were not enough training hospitals and medical posts to accommodate the increasing number of doctors graduating.

"Instead, what we see now is a situation where the number of doctors are overwhelming the capacity of the government to absorb them, causing long delays between graduation and housemanship.

"Once the housemanship is over, the search for medical officers posts begins. These are also nearly full," he told The Malaysian Insider.

He said numerous medical colleges were also under pressure for being unable to attract enough candidates and one such institution was forced to declare itself bankrupt.

"The MMA feels that any such college's licence should not be reissued to another body.

"In the long term, the only solution to the current problem is to equalise supply and demand, reduce the number of colleges, and increase the number of public health facilities.

He added that the new interview session by the public service commission was merely an administrative measure and he doubted the commission was qualified to "screen" fit candidates, who are expected to fulfil their capacity as doctors.

He said "screening" should be carried out before students started medical school.

"The MMA advocates a clinical aptitude test, as used in many countries, to weed out those who do not truly feel passionately about becoming doctors.

"The only way to handle the stress of being a doctor, especially in the early years, is by having a passion for the job that will carry them through," he said.

English daily The Star had quoted Malaysian Medical Council (MMC) chairman Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah as saying that the decision to screen candidates before employing them as house officers (Grade UD 41) was made in a council meeting on December 15.

Dr Noor Hisham, who is also health director-general, acknowledged that there was a backlog in the number of house officers placed in government hospitals due to many failing to complete their training within the stipulated two years, mainly from incompetence or health problems.

This, he said, resulted in limited intakes for medical graduates. – December 30, 2015.

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