

Large numbers of would-be Canadian MDs migrating Down Under

Enrolment at Canada's 16 medical schools has increased by 23% in the past 5 years, but unmet demand is still so strong that would-be doctors are heading to Australia in record numbers.

This spring Flinders University in Adelaide launched an active search for potential Canadian students by placing an advertisement in the spring issue of the *University of Toronto Magazine*. It said the school was saving 30 positions for international students "to join 67 of Australia's best students at the country's leading medical school."

Dr. Jillian Teubner, chair of admissions at Flinders medical school, says 27 of the school's 104 foreign students are Canadian, including 12 registered in first year. Canadians now account for about half of the 130 foreign applications the school receives annually; most of the remaining applicants are Americans.

The numbers are even more impressive at the University of Sydney medical school: about 100 Canadians are already enrolled, and they accounted for one-third of the 149 international applicants for the 2003 academic year.

"I visited Sydney and Flinders when I was in Australia last summer and when I spoke the room was packed," says Sandra Banner, executive director of the Canadian Resident Matching Service. "Essentially my message was that 'we want you' but it may take time to smooth out the barriers to entry. I explained the IMG [international medical graduate] concept and that it does apply to them."

Banner told the Canadians that "if they are interested in [residency] training anywhere in Canada and if family medicine was their career goal, they could be pretty certain they would be matched in the second iteration."

But the response was cool. "They seem to have the same aversion to family medicine as the home-schooled product," she says.

Teubner says that because many of the high-demand residencies in Canada are all but closed to IMGs, including Canadians who have trained abroad, students accepted at Flinders are told they "should not take the decision to study abroad based on [plans to] return to

Canada." Those who do wish to return are encouraged to complete an elective in Canada.

Tuition at Flinders costs Can\$26 000 annually, but Teubner says the cost of living in Adelaide is low. Victoria Haigh, a spokesperson for the University of Sydney medical school, said students accepted there can expect to pay Can\$43 000 annually in tuition and living expenses. The highest tuition fee at a Canadian medical school is \$15 435 at the University of Toronto.

Irish eyes still smiling

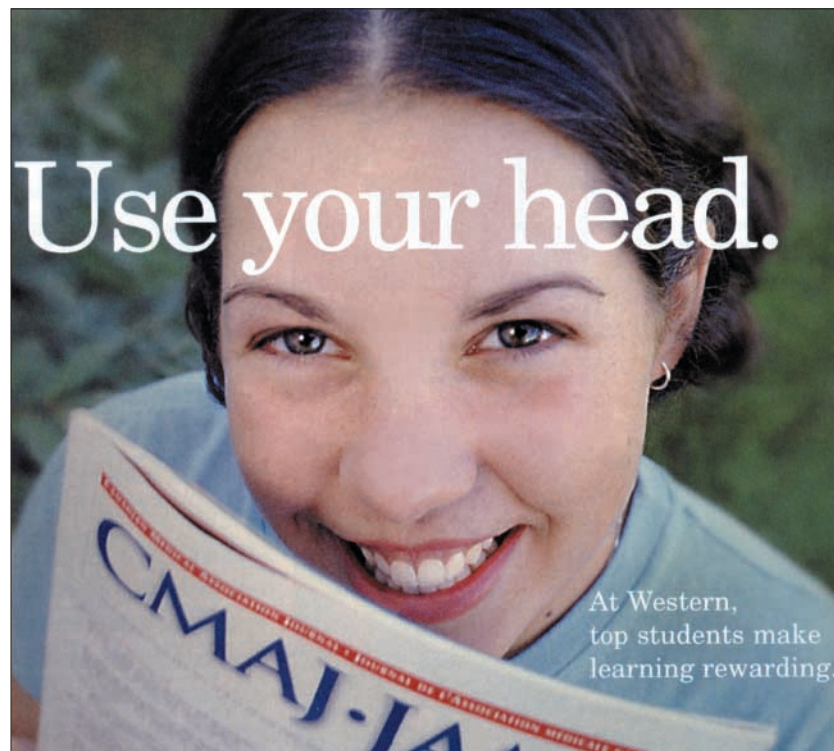
Are Ireland's medical schools, which have a lucrative connection with Canadians who can't get into medical school at home (see *CMAJ* 2000;162[6]:868-

71), worried about the sudden competition from Down Under?

Not at all, says Louis Keenan, director of admissions for the Atlantic Bridge Program that links would-be Canadian medical students with 4 Irish medical schools (www.atlanticbridge.com/). "We've been busier than ever and have sent literally hundreds of application forms [for the Irish schools] to Canada," says Keenan, who was surprised to hear that enrolment at Canadian medical schools has been increasing. "I would not have guessed that from the number of inquiries we get."

He estimated that there are 200 Canadians studying medicine in Ireland, up from slightly more than 100 students 2 years ago. — *Patrick Sullivan, CMAJ*

Poster girl



Lindsey Edmunds, who at 17 became the youngest-ever scientific contributor to *CMAJ* with her recent research letter on probiotics (*CMAJ* 2001;164[11]:1577), is now a poster girl for the University of Western Ontario. Edmunds, a student in the university's new bachelor of medical sciences program, recently appeared in this advertisement that Western placed in *Maclean's* annual ranking of Canadian universities. — *CMAJ*