Sir,
I am delighted at the overwhelming response to my article - 942 hits on the Indian Journal of Surgery Website (www.indianjsurg.com) as of 5th February 2005. At the outset, I would like to thank Dr. Tewari for the very kind remarks.

A number of emails were sent to me over the past couple of months from both Trainers and Trainees. Most Trainers mentioned that this article would serve as a ‘benchmark’ for doctors going to the UK and echoed similar sentiments expressed in Dr. Tewari’s Letter to the Editor.[1] Many Trainees were concerned, distraught and anxious at the evidence-based statistics highlighted in the article in their personal communication to me. Whilst a significant number of them have expressed that they are now better equipped to deal with the current ‘Realities’ after reading the article, there are others who feel that it is not the appropriate time to go to the UK. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Trainers and Trainees for their comments, remarks and feedback.

As a member of the National Governing Council of British International Doctors’ Association (BIDA), UK, the apex body representing the interests of well over 20,000 overseas-qualified doctors in the UK, I am actively involved in helping, guiding and counselling doctors from overseas in the UK.

The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, Department of Health and General Medical Council, UK have recently agreed on an Advisory Statement for Medical graduates thinking of coming to the UK to take Part 2 of the PLAB examination. This was published on 22 December 2004.[2] I felt that this very vital information would be most useful to the readership of the Indian Journal of Surgery.

‘The following information is important for all Medical graduates thinking of coming to the United Kingdom’[2]

1. Competition for House Officer Posts in the UK is currently very high.
2. Thirty-six per cent of overseas graduates who passed PLAB Part 2 conducted by the General Medical Council in June 2003 were still unemployed 6 months later.
3. Your first post in the UK may only be non-training, Locum or Honorary post (non-paid).
4. There are, on an average, 210 applicants for each junior doctor (SHO or SPR) advertisement in the UK. Eight recent advertisements have attracted over 1000 applicants.
5. Because of the very large numbers of applicants, varying, sometimes random, methods of selection are used to shortlist candidates.
6. There are on an average 400 applicants for each Pre-Registration House Officer advertisement. Graduates who have not completed their House Officer posts (or equivalent) in their home country may find it very difficult indeed to obtain a post in the UK.

The UK welcomes and will always welcome overseas graduates. However, it does not wish them to be disadvantaged because of lack of information on the current very high level of competition for junior posts and the long periods of time that they may spend unemployed.

This information is issued on behalf of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, the Department of Health and the General Medical Council; it is accurate as of December 2004.

Further up-to-date details on unemployment and competition for junior doctor posts are available on http://www.bmjcareers.com/juniorcomp and http://www.gmc-uk.org/register/default.htm.'

P. Raghu Ram
Specialist Breast Unit, St. James University Hospital, Leeds, UK
For correspondence: 249 Outwood Lane, Horsforth, Leeds LS18 4SR, UK. E-mail: rpillarisetti@hotmail.com

REFERENCES