

Episode: *Author Interview: “Why Does the US Overly Rely on International Medical Graduates in Its Geriatric Psychiatric Workforce?”*

Guest: Rajesh R. Tampi, MBBS, MS

Host: Tim Hoff

Transcript by: Cheryl Green

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[bright theme music]

[00:00:04] TIM HOFF: Welcome to another episode of the Author Interview series from the *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*. I’m your host, Tim Hoff. This series provides an alternative way to access the interesting and important work being done by Journal contributors each month. Joining me on this episode is Dr Rajesh Tampi, a professor and the inaugural Bhatia Family Endowed Chair in Psychiatry at Creighton University School of Medicine and Catholic Health Initiatives in Omaha, Nebraska. He’s here to discuss his article, coauthored with Drs Aarti Gupta and Iqbal Ahmed, “*Why Does the US Overly Rely on International Medical Graduates in Its Geriatric Psychiatric Workforce?*,” in the October 2023 issue of the Journal, [Geriatric Psychiatry](#). Dr Tampi, thank you so much for being on the podcast.

DR RAJESH TAMP: Tim, thank you for having me on the podcast.

[00:00:54] HOFF: So, to begin with, what’s the main ethics point that you and your coauthors are making in your article?

TAMP: Tim, the main issue is that we don’t have enough geriatric psychiatrists to take care of the growing need of older adults with mental health disorders. And over the past four or five decades, we have actually relied more on international medical graduates to provide the geriatric mental health care in terms of physicians. So, we don’t have enough international medical graduates going into geriatric psychiatry now, so we are staring at a major crisis in terms of having enough geriatric psychiatrists to take care of the needs of the growing older adult population with mental health disorders.

[00:01:37] HOFF: So, what’s the most important thing for health professions students and trainees to take from your article, knowing that they’re the ones who are going to be filling this workforce gap?

TAMP: Correct. So, the main issue that we have right now is that we don’t have enough geriatric psychiatrists at the present time. And in the future, as the population of older adults grow, the number of people with mental health disorders is going to increase, so we are going to face an even more problem with caring for these individuals. So, our main thrust for this article is to encourage physicians who are going into psychiatry to think about geriatric psychiatry as a subspecialty, because we do need more people in this field. Otherwise, we will not be able to care for older adults with mental health disorders.

[00:02:24] HOFF: And finally, if you could add a point to your article that you didn’t have the time or the space to fully explore, what would that be?

TAMP: How to encourage international medical graduates to continue looking at geriatric psychiatry as a subspecialty. The problem is with all the political climate and all the changes in visa requirements that is happening, less international medical graduates are going into geriatric psychiatry. So, we want to encourage international medical graduates

and US medical graduates to go into geriatric psychiatry because we do need their help in caring for older adults with mental health disorders. [theme music returns] Or the crisis that we are in right now is going to continue to deepen.

[00:03:05] HOFF: Dr Tampi, thank you so much for your time on the podcast, and thanks to you and your coauthors for your contribution to the Journal this month.

TAMPI: Thank you very much, Tim. Thank you for having me.

HOFF: To read the full article, as well as the rest of this month's issue for free, visit our site, journalofethics.org. We'll be back soon with more *Ethics Talk* from the *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*.