

Hey Ultrasounds listeners! Would you like a chance to win a \$50.00 Amazon gift card? Fill out a feedback survey. More info at the end of this episode.

--

Sarena: Hello everyone. Welcome to the latest episode of Ultrasounds brought to you by OBGYN delivered. I'm Sarena and I'm Brittany, and we're your medical student host for today's episode. We're excited to announce our two episode series on International medical student rotations. Today we have some of our wonderful colleagues that we've met on our rotation in Kumasi, Ghana, who are going to talk about their experiences in their respective countries and medical school experiences.

Brittany: Great. So let's get started. First, I think it'll be great if we can all introduce ourselves, so I think it'll be great, to start, if you could all please introduce yourself, your country of origin, your medical school, the city you live in. And

Sarena: We'll go from there.

Brittany: Yeah, we can go from there. I can go ahead and get started for me and Sarena. Perfect. So we are both from the United States and we both go to the University of Michigan, which is in Ann Arbor, MI.

Lovisa: Yeah, and my name is Lovisa. My country of origin is Sweden and I'm currently a medical student at Linköping University in Sweden as well, and I just finished my 4th year of Med school.

Delice: And my name is Delice and I'm also from Sweden. I live in Gothenburg and I'm in my fifth year of medical school now.

Mwini: OK hello, I'm Mwini-Numbu Nacauley. I'm a fifth year medical student at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana. And yeah, as I said, I'm in my fifth year.

Maria: Hello, my name is Maria Guadalupe. I'm from Brazil. I currently live in a city called Jundiaí. I'm studying the Faculdade de Medicina de Jundiaí. I'm currently in my 4th year.

Enam: Hi, my name is Enam Abra Sekyi and I'm from Ghana. I'm in fourth year in medical school at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, and I live in Accra, Ghana. Yeah.

Sarena: Wonderful. Well, thank you everyone for joining us today. We really appreciate you taking your time on your very precious time here in this wonderful country of Ghana. And we are excited to have both local medical students and other foreign exchange students here so we can get a better idea of different medical education systems throughout the world. One of our first questions is asking you each to walk us through the medical education timeline in your country starting after graduation from high school, because everyone has a different type of path and might not have the typical college university training that the United States is used to. So I'll start with Brittany talking about just a brief overview of the United States medical education.

Brittany: Yeah, so in the United States we typically graduate high school around the age of 18 and then students will go on to four years at a college or university where you can get a bachelor's degree in

anything. These are typically your “premed” courses, as you might have heard before. After that you apply to medical school, which would be another four years. To which, at the end of medical school you apply to residency. And the length of residency just depends on the specialty you choose, but ranges from 3 to 7 years. And afterwards you can further specialize with fellowships. But I don't think we need to get into those details today.

Sarena: Absolutely. And you're technically considered a doctor in the United States after you finish your four years of medical school, but you're not boarded to practice within a specific field of medicine until you finish your residency. So you practice as a physician under the supervision of boarded physicians throughout the course of your residency and for the purposes of OBGYN that's going to be a four year residency.

Brittany: Yeah, that's a great point. And I think it's important to kind of say that some of the terms we use, is our first year of residency, we're called interns and that our boarded physicians are called attendings in the United States because I think that can differ. Great, you guys want to talk about Sweden?

Lovisa: Yeah. So in Sweden, you normally graduate high school when you're 18 or 19 and then you can apply for university.

Delice: Yes, right away,

Lovisa: Straight away if you want to. And when we started, the program was 5 years and now it's six years. They've changed that.

Delice: Yeah. And what we do is we have this like divided from preclinical like you do as well for 2 years and then there's three years of clinical rotations. Yeah. And then we have two years of mandatory internships before you get your license and after that you can apply for residency, which is normally five years and with some exceptions.

Sarena: Does everyone apply for residency?

Delice: Yeah, everyone applies for, applies for residency, is it? Well, there's always exceptions, but that is kind of normal path to go and you could of course like do research and stuff instead. And in the meantime, in between maybe. That is normal way of doing it .

Sarena: Are the residency lengths different in Sweden for different specialties?

Lovisa: It is normally five years for almost every specialty, I think.

Delice: Yeah.

Lovisa: With some exceptions. And I think thoracic surgery is 6 years, if I'm not mistaken. But yeah, I think most of them are five years.

Sarena: And can you guys remind us one more time where you are within this timeline?

Delice: Yeah, so I am in my fifth year now and since we have 5 1/2 years, I have one year left.

Lovisa: Yeah. And I just finished my 4th year, so that means that I have one year and a half to go, yeah.

Delice: Yeah, we're getting closer.

Lovisa: I see the light in the end of the tunnel.

Delice: Yeah, yeah. I'm actually feeling like every rotation I do is a giant step towards being finished. It's like a slope now, downhill.

Sarena: Downhill is important.

Mwini: OK. So Enam and I are going to take Ghana. Yeah. So in Ghana, you complete Senior High School around 17-18 years and you enter medical school straight. You don't have to go through any other. Yeah. And that's based on the course you're do in Senior High School. In our Senior High School system you go based on courses. So there's general arts, there's general science, there's visual arts, there's home economics and business.

Enam: You're already kind of doing something towards where you want to end up. So if I did general arts in Senior High School, it wouldn't be possible for me to choose medicine in the university. So it kind of starts from high school.

Sarena: So how early do you have to start planning to go into medical school if that's what you want to do?

Mwini: From JHS, because that's when you choose your course. So when you're around 15, yeah. So when you're about writing your final exams to enter Senior High School, you choose your school and of course you want. So based on the cost you get, so if you do something like generals, there's no way you can do medicine. But if you do, the good thing about doing science is you can always branch into everything else. You can branch into business, you can branch into generals, you can branch into home economics, sciences like the best course to do, because you do everything.

Enam: So alot of of parents encourage us just to go for science, because it's the safe option. When you get there, then you get to choose whatever you want. So yeah, you can branch from general science that you did in high school to whatever you want. But you can't, like, come in from business or general arts to come and do a science based topic or field like medicine or engineering or anything like that.

Delice: That's actually exactly the same in Sweden.

Mwini: OK, so you enter into medical school after your interview when your exams. So, yeah, that's the way they pick. So medical school is 6 years here, you do three years of preclinical and three years of clinical and you get your human biology first degree certificate. Then you start with your clinical rotation. That's where we are right now. Yeah, I mean she's in 4th year, I'm in 5th year.

Enam: So after which you have two years of housemanship, compulsory housemanship. I think that's kind of like your internship in Sweden. Yes. And after that you are well a medical officer, you have the

license to practice in whichever facility you want. But then from there you can also do, I think after some time, I think it's three years or so.

Mwini: Yeah, depending on their facility that you are a medical officer at they, I think they choose to sign you off if your supervisors are satisfied with how what you've learned as a medical officer. So usually it's like 3 years, being a medical officer before you can start residency. That's in Ghana. But if you choose to leave after your housemanship, you can go outside and specialize there. So basically that's it.

Sarena: Just as a summary for all of our listeners, it sounds like in both Ghana and Sweden, you go straight into your medical school training right out of high school when you're around 18 years old. And then you continue for sixish years until you do this extra training as a physician. That's called either internship in Sweden ,or House job in Ghana. And that's where the term House officer is used here. And I think it's important to distinguish between, in the United States, we use the term House officer to refer to all of our residents and the term intern to refer to our first year residents. So when we say intern in Sweden, that's someone who hasn't started their residency, same for house officer. And sometimes that can be confusing when we talk about our residents with all of these different terms. So I think that's something that we have all figured out as we talk to each other about our paths moving forward, we'll start talking about different terms, meaning different things; the same term, different things.

Brittany. Yeah, and I think one difference as well, forgive me if I'm wrong, but in Ghana you don't have to do a residency after your house job if you want to be like a General practitioner

Mwini: You can just be a medical officer. You don't have to. Most people do. But most people just go outside and specialize there, and we hardly have them coming back. But few of them do, do their residency.

Sarena: Can you tell us more about what residency looks like if you elect not to just do your house officer position and go practice as a general practitioner and instead decide to go into residency?

Mwini: OK, depending on the specialty you're doing your residency, that would determine the length of years.

Enam: Some of the fields, like I think for orthopedics for example, I think you can jump straight into it. But for some of the other fields you kind of have to do a bit of everything before you focus on what you actually want to do. So even though.

Mwini: I know Obstetrics and gynecology, you have to do your residency, you have to do the entire obstetrics and gynecology. Then after that, you know, I think you do your fellowship in either obstetrics and gynecology or gynecology, you choose one. Yeah, I think thats how it work. So. Depending on the specialty you are doing, you have different requirements, you have different lengths of years. So yeah.

Enam: So we can't exactly give you a range like you can say five years or something, it's it varies.

Sarena: Perfect. Thank you. I suppose.

Delice: No, I was just worried that internship is not really the correct word to use but actually Google it now and I think that's the closest to like our what is called like if you, try to translate it directly, it would

be like a general service. Is the Swedish. Yeah, it's like the Swedish word for it, but I think internship is actually what's used in English. So that was just the thing I was worrying a bit about.

Lovisa: And also, I think one difference, if I'm not mistaken, between house officers here in Ghana and our interns in Sweden is that we don't get our license until after our internship, while the House officers here do have a license.

Sarena: Yeah. That is a big distinguishing factor because people will refer to themselves as physicians at different points in their training. Like in the states, it's after the four years of medical school, but we've actually had eight years because we also did four years of college beforehand. And so it doesn't translate when we tell people on our international rotation that we're fourth years. It sounds like it. We're starting our first year of clinicals, which would be the case in Ghana, but we're actually applying into residency and graduating in a few months, so, yeah different. Different strokes for different folks!

Maria: OK, I'm going to talk about Brazil now, but I'm starting saying something that is different. So intern in Brazil is actually the last two years of medical school. So the 5th and six years are called interns in Brazil because you work as you're a doctor but with the supervisor of an attending. So you do everything that you're supposed to do as a house officer here, but as a non doctor. So you have to be supervised by someone that has more knowledge than you. So like the whole path of medical school in Brazil is like this. We get out of high school, like in 17 years old or 18 years old and we go to medical school. We have to go through an entrance exam. It's actually very hard to get into med school. It's one of the most hard things to do in Brazil. You have to study everything that you went through high school to get into medical. And yeah, you're getting to Med school. Medical school is 6 years, just like here in Ghana. And the last like you start with three years of preclinical and you have like anatomy, physiology and everything and your 4th year you start having clinical subjects. So you have Pediatrics, O&G, Medicine, Internal Medicine and Surgery and everything like this. And you start having practical lessons. So you go to the hospital, you take history from the patient and everything, but you're not still doing rotations exactly. In your 5th year you start rotations. And we do like this: It's two months for each rotation and results. So for example, next year I'm in my 4th year, I'm finishing fourth year I still have two months to go over my 4th year and I will start 5th year next year. So I'll start with vacation and then after two months I'll start with Internal Medicine and then I will go to Pediatrics. And every two months we change rotations and we do that in our fifth year and our 6th year. So we go through everything in this last three years of medical school. In the 4th year, just lessons and like looking what the doctors do and in the 5th year and 6th year actually getting the job done with them. And it's pretty much like this. And after you graduate, you are a doctor, so you are a physician, you have your license and you can practice, but you practice as a general doctor. So you go to the ER, you do normal things. And then as to have a residency, you have to apply for a residency and you have to make a test. So like the entrance exam in the beginning when we got into med school, you have to do the same thing for the residency in a specific hospital. So you have a lot of hospitals to apply to, just like United States, but we have to actually make a test. It's we don't have like letters of recommendation and none of that. It's just like really hard test that we have to go through and then you start residency and like here, it depends on which subject you choose. For example, I think Gynecology and Obstetric, it's like 5 years I think or six years. And Pediatrics is 5 years. And if you choose a specialty related to Internal Medicine, for example, you have to do three years just as a General practitioner and then you specialize on for example Cardiology. And then you do like how many years the Cardiology was expect you to and then you become like a specialist I think and that's how it is in Brazil.

Enam: So after high school you go straight into medical school.

Maria: Yes, we go straight to medical school.

Enam: Our system is very similar to the Brazilian one. Yeah, yeah, very similar. Even we forgot to mention the residents and they actually have exams.

Mwini: Yeah, the residents, do your residents write exams?

Sarena: Yes, we have boarding exams that are split across the course of medical school and residency. So you have, they call them step 1, 2 and 3 because we're really creative. So we take step one and two when we're in our last years of medical school and that's one of the prerequisites to apply into residency like Maria was saying in Brazil. And so that's like one of the criteria they used to see your application strength. And then once you're in residency, you do Step 3, which is going to be at a physician level. And then at the end of residency, you take your board exams, which are like to actually certify you to practice that specialty.

Mwini: Do they write normal exams like how they do here? Like the resident, while they are practicing do they write exams?

Sarena: Interesting. Yeah. In the States, I don't think that there's as many like formal exams. It's a lot of clinical responsibilities to the point where you are, the residents tend to run all the units in the hospital. The attending physicians are the people who supervise for all the medical decision making. But the residents get all of the work done and move all the pieces. And so that's kind of the responsibility less as an academic learner, although there's a lot of learning. Be done while you practice clinically.

Brittany: I would say there's like less. Like attending physicians or like consultants as they call them here in Ghana, like on a team in the states where like there might be like our team right now has like 4-5 consultants on it. And back home, there would be like 1.

Sarena: There's only one boarded physicians and then there'd be more residents. Yeah.

Brittany: Which is something, it's a little different, but that could also just be based more on our hospital system as well since we haven't practiced elsewhere.

Sarena: That's true, that's true. That's actually a good point. I think that the term used for the physician who has finished their residency is different in every country. So in the United States, it's called an attending. I'm wondering if you guys can just very quickly tell us what it's called in your country.

Delice: So after residency, when you're finished, we would call it like a specialist in whatever you have done your residency in.

Mwini: OK, in Ghana, specialists are like they just finished their residency, but consultants will be done like research. OK. Consultants have done research. They've done extra. They've added more to their specialty. Yeah. And then professors are obviously those who have written people, done academic writing.

Maria: Yeah, I think in Brazil will be called specialist as well. I don't think we have like attending name or something. If we work in a hospital, we would call them chiefs. Again, I think like when you're the chair, the main person in the hospital I think would be that, but I think it's a specialist. OK.

Sarena: Thank you for clarifying.

Enam: Specialists and consultants are like a two step thing. I think everyone once you are done with residency then you kind of attain that position that's like chief or specialist. Is that is there like another level where we have specialist and consultant?

Delice: Yeah. So we are also, like after to your specialist, you can be a like you can be, yeah, like a consultant. That is kind of the next best step. It is more...

Lovisa: Its more to do with, Maybe with the years of experience and the responsibility that you take.

Delice: Yeah. So when you're finished with residency you're a specialist and that is kind of your degree, but you can take a job as a consultant after a few years of when you have a few years of experience. So that is kind of the next step. But it's a job, it's like you're employed as it.

Sarena: So you can be a specialist straight out of residency, but the higher level job is called consultant.

Delice: Yeah, it's something like consultant or like the chief. Yes, you can have different kinds of jobs, but your degree is a specialist. That's kind of the closest way of explaining it for me. Yeah. And you can be a professor as well or like your degree is a specialist.

Sarena: Yeah, I think the US might be the odd one out in this case. No surprise there.

Brittany: Thank you all for taking the time to record this episode and thank you to our audience for tuning in! Join us next week for Part 2 of International Women in Medicine to hear from Lovisa, Delice, Mwini, Maria, Enam, Sarena, and I again and about how our gender identity plays into our experiences with healthcare training in our respective countries.

I want to give a special shoutout to Maria Ibarra from the University of Michigan Medical School who is our first raffle winner! If you'd like a chance at winning our next \$50 gift card raffle, fill out our feedback survey, linked in the description."

Subscribe to UltraSounds wherever you get your podcasts. For more high yield topic reviews and recent news, you can also follow us on Instagram or Twitter @obgyn_delivered. Or find more topic review outlines and free question banks at our website www.obgyndelivered.com. And always remember we put in the labor, so you can deliver.

--

Hey listeners, thanks for listening to this episode of UltraSounds. Would you like the chance to win a \$50.00 Amazon gift card? Fill out our feedback survey linked in the description of this podcast. Make sure to complete all questions in order to be eligible for the raffle. Participation in this survey is voluntary and responses will be used to better UltraSounds for audience members like you. The survey takes less than

five minutes to complete and will invite you to enter into a raffle for a \$50.00 gift card upon your submission. Ob/Gyn Delivered appreciates your feedback!