

Hi everyone. Welcome to the LungFit podcast. My name is Guilherme. I work as a research assistant in Dr. Camp's lab. And today I'm gonna talk about my work here and also about my story as an IMG trying to launch my medical career in Canada. For those of you who are not familiar with this acronym i m g stands for International Medical Graduate. So that's what I am. I'm a medical graduate. I'm a medical doctor, and I graduated outside of Canada. First of all, I would like to thank Dr. Camp and also Ashley for the opportunity of talking on this podcast. I'm very glad to be part of this. And to begin with a little background about myself. So, as I mentioned, I'm a medical doctor. I'm from Brazil. I'm 30 years old. I was born in Brazil and I went to medical school there.

I graduated in May, 2020, and that was right after the Covid 19 pandemic started. Before that in 2015, while I was already in medical school I was fortunate to be granted a scholarship funded by the Brazilian Ministry of education at that time to study abroad. So I chose Canada as my destination. And during two years, I studied at UBC. I took an English course there. I went to classes in the kinesiology program, and I also did a research internship here at HLI actually in St. Paul's Hospital, same place where Dr. Camp's lab is located now. After returning to Brazil, after that exchange period my girlfriend Amanda who also took part in that exchange program and Amanda is now my wife. We started thinking about the possibility of moving to Canada. So we started studying about the process, reading websites blogs, the government websites, the embassy website. And we decided to do elective rotations here in Canada. And we did that in 2020 from January to March right before the pandemic started. So most of my stories shaped by the Covid 19 pandemic. So we did this elective rotations here for like almost two months so we could have a sense of how, like being a doctor in Canada looked like. And we definitely liked.

So we came back to Brazil. We were more decided about pursuing this path. So we came back to Brazil. We finished medical school, we graduated and we started working as family physicians in Brazil. Brazil has a slightly different medical, medical school system than Canada. There in Brazil, we are allowed to work right after we leave medical school. So there right after medical school, you, you can work as a general practitioner. In my case, I worked as a family physician, but people also work in emergency departments. For example. There's a wide range of places that you can work as a medical graduate that just left medical school. And that happens because in Brazil medical school is a little longer than in Canada and the US there, the whole process takes about six years.

For me it was even longer because I did this exchange program. So it took me seven years and a half to finish medical school. So when we graduated in May, 2020, we started working as family physicians. And as many of you might remember the Covid pandemic was already hitting like very hard in many parts of the world at that time. And in Brazil, the situation was really bad. As family physicians, we had to like dedicate almost a hundred percent of our time in the clinic to the pandemic response. So prevention strategies learning how to wear the, the personal protective equipment and the number of cases were, was very high. The clinic's full capacity was being directed towards seeing training testing Covid patients. And that had an impact in other areas of our work.

So other areas like suffered a lot. And even though we tried to minimize this let's say collateral damage many patients with chronic conditions such as hypertension or diabetes, for example patients who needed continued assistance, they had to stay for months without any follow up. Because our attention was focused on the c response. So we couldn't do follow up exams, we couldn't do like appointments or

we couldn't order laboratory exams for these patients. And that was the biggest challenge. Every time the Covid cases started to slow down we had to literally rescue these patients. In Brazil, like the organization of typical family health clinic is different than here in Canada. Down there we organize the city in territories. So each family clinic is responsible for a specific territory. So, which means all patients in a certain like neighborhood, they are seen by the same doctor at the same health unit.

So we have a profession that I think is very unique, that it's called community agents. And this community agents, there are people who live in these neighborhoods and they, they literally knock from door to door when, when it's needed, when it's needed to, to convey any health message to the population or when we need to rescue patients. So in this periods when after the Covid cases started to slow down, we had literally to rescue these patients, these patients with chronic conditions that needed continued assistance. So the community agents, they went there and they rescued these patients so we could continue their care as it should be. And that part of our job that sense of responsibility and this longitudinal relations with the patients and the community. These were the factors I think that they made me choose family medicine as the specialty I want to pursue here in Canada.

So despite being a very difficult time I think it could sparkle in me like this this willingness to, to do this job and do this like the right way. So during all this period, while we were like both working as family doctors, me and my wife we also had to study for the medical validation exams here in Canada. So we studied for these exams, like there are two of them. One of them we could write it from Brazil, the other one we had to go to Toronto last year. Write it. It's a practical exam. It's called Oskey exam. So we interact with actors who play the role of patients, and while we interact with them, we are being Examined by a doctor. So we fortunately passed these two exams, and also during that time, we were applying for our permanent residency visa. So those times were very busy for us. We were working as family physicians in a completely like different scenario, than like we were trained for. We had to learn a lot of things every day. We had to follow like the new developments in Covid treatment and in Covid assessment. And we still had to work on our personal project studying for these exams and applying for the residency visa. So that was a very busy, but a very productive time of our lives. So after our visa was approved, we were able to move to Canada, and we did that in March this year. On one hand we were very happy to move here because that was like our dream, like to begin with, right?

On the other hand once we land here as IMGs, we cannot work in our professions anymore. So, which means we are not doctors anymore. And of course, that did not happen only with me or my wife. Every single I m G passes through the same situation of working in other areas, like while applying for medical residency. And despite this lack of physicians that exist in Canada there are not enough residency spots for all of them for all IMGs that come from other countries, and many of them are forced to change careers forever. So I know a lot of mgs that just gave up trying to match in a residency program, and they completely changed their careers. They're working like in many different areas. Some of them are very happy, of course, but some of them are frustrated because they, they thought they would be able to work as doctors in Canada, but they couldn't.

Fortunately both me and my wife, we could find jobs for this transition time, we could find jobs related to the medical field. And in May this year, I joined Dr. Camp's lab as a research assistant. This job has been like both a big challenge but also an incredible opportunity for me in so many ways. Constantly I'm

having to develop like new skills that I did not have before as a physician. Like dealing with technical issues, like building spreadsheets, dealing with data, learning how to use the lab equipment, organizing the lab. And this has been like very rewarding for me because I'm pretty sure this is gonna be translated towards my career, like as a doctor here in Canada. And also as Dr. Camp mentioned in the last episode of this podcast the focus of the labs' study is mainly on First Nations communities.

So I'm having the opportunity to learn a lot about this, this First Nations communities in BC. And this is very valuable for me because not only I'm studying and learning about them, but I'm also able to travel and see how they exist like in local. So I'm pretty sure this knowledge will be certainly very beneficial for me, like in my career and as a citizen in general in Canada. So this is being like a great opportunity. And along with working with Dr. Camp now my wife and I, like we are working on our medical residency application. There are still like many steps to go in this process. It's a very long process, but as we go through this like very long process, we learned that the journey itself is the most important part.

So just like by being here in Canada, like living here, we are also like, we're already like very happy and we are not focused so much on the outcomes of this process. Of course, the outcomes are important, but the journey itself has been great, and we need to focus on that so we, we can keep like our mental health and continue like pursuing this, this path. Again, thank you very much Dr. Camp and Ashley for inviting me to share my story here on this podcast. If by any chance you are interested in talking to me, like maybe you are an IMG feel free to send me a message. I'm more than happy to talk to you. So again, thank you very much for listening. Have a great day and a great week. Bye-Bye.