Do many skilled people emigrate from MENA?

Emigration rates, by skill level and region of origin

Yes, they do; at 9%, high-skilled emigration from MENA is much higher than the world average. In fact, with intra-MENA mobility itself being so high, rates of high-skilled emigration are even larger. These flows have caused concern, especially regarding healthcare workers, because of widespread physician shortages.
Does MENA have a shortage of doctors?

Yes, it does.
And migration is often blamed for this shortage.

Source: World Bank, WHO, EIU, Al Masah Capital Research
How much is migration to blame for this shortage?

If emigrant doctors returned:
Doctors abroad as proportion of "doctor deficit"

For example, if all of Morocco's emigrant doctors returned to Morocco, they would fill only 14% of the gap between the existing stock of doctors and the recommended stock of doctors.

It seems that framing migration as the culprit would be an exaggeration. And even these numbers are overestimates because...
Many people emigrate before becoming doctors

North African (excluding Egypt) doctors in the U.S.

- **Born in North Africa**:
  - Trained in another African Country: 15
  - Trained in the United States: 263
  - Trained in the rest of the world: 151
  - Total: 50% of Total

- **Trained in North Africa**:
  - Born in another African Country: 28
  - Born in the United States: 57
  - Born in the rest of the world: 47
  - Total: 35% of Total

- **Total**: 862

So while migration has been blamed for shortages in MENA and elsewhere, it doesn't appear to be the root of the problem, after all.

Ozden, UNFPA & OECD Conference Mobilizing Migrant Skills for Development in MENA Region 2013
But don't countries with high levels of physicians abroad have poorer health outcomes?

The data above doesn't support that, either. Perhaps in casting migration as a disease, we've overlooked its potential role as a cure? We'll investigate this potential in our next edition.