

## **Title**

### ***Skin Health in General Practice***

## **Audience ALL**

All

## **Needs assessment**

Skin conditions comprise 17% of all problems encountered in general practice.<sup>1</sup> General practitioners (GPs) require a wide range of expertise for skin complaints, including diagnosis and management of acute and chronic skin conditions, skin cancer screening and diagnosis, performance of diagnostic biopsies and/or definitive excisional treatment, referral or collaborative care with non-GP specialists and preventive care. Advancing technology and understanding of the skin microbiome, its role in skin health, has become notable in the last couple of years creating a growth in research and understanding of the skin health and healing processes.<sup>2,3,4</sup>

Patients and parents are requesting a range of treatment options sympathetic to their concepts of autonomous management of skin.<sup>4,5,6</sup> Chronic skin disorders are estimated to affect 4% of the Australian population, with eczema and psoriasis being the most common chronic skin conditions, affecting 1% and 2.5% of Australians respectively.<sup>7</sup> In the paediatric population, dermatitis/eczema was managed in 6.9 per 100 GP encounters.<sup>8,9</sup> GPs should be aware of the medical and psychosocial dimensions of chronic skin disease, where a bio-psychosocial approach is more likely to result in a more personalised and holistic management plan.<sup>10,11,12</sup>

Skin cancers remain a very high concern within the Australian population. At least two in three Australians will develop skin cancer before the age of 70.<sup>13</sup> Pre-cancerous and cancerous skin lesions, including melanoma, comprise 2.2% of encounters in general practice.<sup>1</sup> Even in melanoma, GP involvement may include definitive management, where the GP has appropriate training and skill.<sup>14</sup>

Australia's high survival rate for skin cancers reflects that access to effective primary care services for early detection and evidence-based treatment of skin cancers is successful.<sup>15</sup> A large proportion of skin cancer are preventable. GPs play a crucial role in educating patients about sun-smart behaviours, as well as early detection of new or changing lesions.<sup>16,17</sup>

Procedural skills are key to management of skin conditions in general practice.<sup>18</sup> Of the 10 most common problems managed with by procedures are skin complaints, including skin lacerations, scar remediation, solar keratosis/sunburn, warts, malignant neoplasms of the skin, and skin ulcers.<sup>1,19,20</sup>

The range of surgical skills required by GPs varies, with GPs in areas with particularly high prevalence of skin cancer performing increasingly technical procedures in the treatment of skin cancers.<sup>14</sup> Availability of local medical expertise greatly aid patients, particularly in the area of scar management. GP's can seek opportunities for formal training to meet community needs, particularly in rural and remote locations. This skill is greatly appreciated by the general GP population but more so from less socially advantaged, rural and remote backgrounds as access to specialist care may be unaffordable or physically distance. GP's patients will be often present to their GPs first, particularly with sub-optimal surgical, UV

stigmata and other scarring. GP's can offer non-invasive office based diagnosis and primary step treatment options.<sup>19,22,23</sup>

Diagnosis of damaged to skin in the Australian climate can occur before the manifestation of pathology, such as skin cancers.<sup>24,25,26</sup> This affords the general practitioner to take part in opportunistic and preventative education.<sup>27</sup>

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## Course Description

The course is presented in five sections, which cover the concept of healthy skin, wound healing, scarring and remediation. The course collates the latest scientific knowledge on the concept of healthy skin. The general complications of wound healing are discussed, along with the wound healing profile of acute and chronic wounds. The biochemistry and

physiological processes of wound healing and scar remediation that the general practitioner can begin in their rooms.

Suggested references help guide the GP through the literature and add value more in-depth knowledge to the information presented in the course. Foundational concepts and knowledge are tested at the end of each section. The pass mark is 80%, once completed the candidate can move to the next section, and on completion of the final online quiz requires (3 attempts, pass mark of 80%) a certificate of completion is generated.

### **Learning Objective**

1. Summarise concepts of skin health.
2. Identify skin stigmata of UV damage.
3. Review concept of skin microbiome and its contribution to skin and physical health.
4. Describe the physiology of wound healing.
5. Describe sub-optimal surgical scar treatment options.

### **Core units**

- Domain 1 Communication skills and the patient-doctor relationship
- Domain 2 Applied professional knowledge and skills
- Domain 3 Population health and the context of general practice
- Rural health

### **Contextual units**

- Dermatological presentations
- Integrative medicine
- Research in general practice

### **Program level units**

- 1.2 GPs use effective health education strategies to promote health and wellbeing
- 1.4 GPs provide the primary contact for holistic and patient-centred care
- 2.2 GPs are innovative and informed by evidence
- 2.3 GPs collaborate and coordinate care
- 3.1 GPs practise in a sustainable and accountable manner to support the environment, their community and the Australian healthcare system
- 4.1 GPs are ethical and professional
- 5.1 GPs use effective practice management processes and systems to continually improve quality and safety

### **Pre-reading**

Each section has a range of suggested peer review reading list to help consolidate discussions from the presentations.

Section One: Concepts of Skin Health Reference List

Section Two: UV Damage and Skin Reference List

Sections Three: Skin microbiome, Skin health and pH Reference List

Section Four: The Physiology of Wound Healing Reference List

Section Five: Sub-optimal Scar Formation: Initiating In-practice Treatments Reference List

### **Assessment and certificate of completion**

The course is designed to increase knowledge with each section. Each section has a provided list of references to aid knowledge acquisition and help consolidation of concepts.

After the completion of each section, the candidate will be required to complete and pass a mini-quiz with an 80% pass rate. After the completion of all sections and mini-quizzes the candidate will complete a final quiz, with a pass mark of 80% (three attempts) to be awarded their certificate of completion.