

# Title: The untapped potential of General Practitioners in augmenting dermatology research

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Dermatology is a highly dynamic field. Clinical research remains vital in the diagnosis and management of skin diseases to improve patient outcomes. Australia has among the highest skin cancer rates globally. With many researchers being dermatologists, there is a limited workforce shortage due to a projected deficit of 90 dermatologists by 2030 recently reported by our Department of Health. There are 508 registered dermatologists in 2015 versus a total of 36,938 general practitioners (GPs) in 2017.Hence, general practitioners can play a role to increase dermatology research as patients often present to GPs first seeking initial advice.

One of the possible ways to cultivate this is to increase awareness within dermatology and its potential for research even amongst undergraduate programs as dermatology teaching is limited in Australian Higher Education Institutions. Only 4/17 medical schools had compulsory dermatology clinical attachments. Research should be encouraged and this should stem from the curriculum itself. Regular clinical meetings to bridge the gap between dermatologists and primary care providers can be implemented to increase awareness and enhance patient recruitment for clinical trials. Furthermore, establishing standardised courses in the methodology of monitoring response to therapy would aid GP involvement in the assessment of outcomes in various clinical trial scenarios.

With the rise in tele-dermatology, patients in rural regions have newfound opportunities to access current clinical trials, more so than ever before. This can be utilised as a tool by rural GPs in patient recruitment, treatment commencement and the communication of results to their fellow researchers.

Biography:

Dr. Jacqueline Chen graduated from Monash University in 2013 and completed her fellowship examinations with the RACGP in 2018 and is a general practitioner in South Australia with an interest in Dermatology.

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