



# UK DERMATOLOGY CLINICAL TRIALS NETWORK

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## ANNUAL REPORT 2021

### Highlights:

- APRICOT study results published
- New funding for studies in acne and eczema
- ALPHA, SAFA and THESEUS recruit to target

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20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



I know – annual reports can be very dull, but this one is different. Different because it is **all about you** and the difference each and every one of you makes to this wonderful collaboration. You are probably aware of one or two studies that have come to fruition in 2021, and you probably know about some of our new studies in the pipeline, but when you see them, all listed together in this report, the activity is something to behold. I still fall back in my seat and say “wow” (and if my cat is sitting behind me, she will join in with a “wew”).

Just sounding impressive is not enough though: the UK DCTN is all about **improving care for people** with skin disease. So, when you look at this summary of results and current activity, do think about what it will mean for clinical practice and whether and how you will actually **change your practice** as a result of the study in question. Otherwise, it is all feverish activity and fine words.

You will also find a summary of our **priority setting partnerships** in this report, plus an overview of all the **training and education** activities that energise us so much. Our **themed funding calls** have worked really well by pump-priming new areas of needed research, and you can read more about these and forthcoming calls.

I know I have not mentioned the pandemic yet, but that is because we have managed quite well despite everything. We are all adjusting to new ways of working and learning to live with the virus. Thank you (and the CRN Dermatology Specialty Group in particular) for going the extra mile with study recruitment and enabling studies to be completed to time and target in order to provide timely answers to clinical questions for patients and the NHS.

2022 will be a special year for us as it will be the **20th anniversary of the UK DCTN**. We have a number of things in mind to mark the occasion including special articles, a song and a splash at the annual BAD meeting in July, so take stock for a moment to consider the wonderful progress we have made. Nobody asked us to form a UK Dermatology Clinical Trials Network. It was simply a collective vision to address some of the uncertainties encountered in every day clinical practice that **people** (dermatologists, patients, carers, nurses, pharmacists, applied researchers) felt they could buy into. Doing the sort of clinical trials that industry would never tackle and doing them to a high standard and competing for national funding with the best of other medical specialties.

Yes, we have come a long way – all thanks to you and the contribution you make. Saying thank you is important. Special thanks go to our co-ordinating centre staff and all who give their time freely to contribute to our various committees. The British Association of Dermatologists (BAD) has kindly agreed to support the UK DCTN for another three years on top of existing funding, so that really does give us some stability for the future. **Thank you BAD.**

**Hywel C. Williams OBE DSc FMedSci**

## ABOUT THE UK DCTN

The UK Dermatology Clinical Trials Network (UK DCTN) was established in 2002 by a group of dermatologists and patient representatives. Its main focus is to develop independent clinical trials and improve research capacity in the dermatology community. The creation of the UK DCTN was driven by a number of factors including:

- The need for trials addressing questions about commonly used treatments of uncertain benefit that industry has no incentive to tackle.
- The desire to democratise research and empower healthcare professionals to identify important clinical uncertainties and to work collectively to address them.
- To ensure that patients and carers voices are heard in the prioritisation and conduct of such trials.
- The necessity for high quality standards so that study results are meaningful and can influence policy and practice for the benefit of skin patients.

Since 2002, the UK DCTN has grown in membership to over 1,000 members including dermatology consultants and trainees, patients and carers, dermatology nurses, academics, methodologists, research administrators, general practitioners and anyone with an interest in skin disease.

The Coordinating Centre is a small team who work with investigators across the country to develop their ideas for dermatology clinical trials into fundable research proposals. Our main functions are:

- To support the development of research ideas generated from our membership into fundable research proposals.
- To provide training and capacity building in applied dermatology research.
- To help prioritise dermatology research by supporting prioritisation activities and offering small funding grants to assist feasibility and pilot studies.

Find out more about the UK DCTN by watching the short video on our website (link below). Membership is free and anyone with an interest in applied dermatology research is welcome to join.

You can donate to the UK DCTN (registered charity number 1115745) via the donate button on our website [www.ukdctn.org](http://www.ukdctn.org)

## 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

There have been some real successes to celebrate across the wide and varied UK DCTN study portfolio over the past year including new publications, new funding, pilot and feasibility work for new studies, and studies meeting recruitment targets. There has also been the re-launch of our capacity building initiatives, and an OBE for UK DCTN Chair Professor Hywel Williams.

### Results in print

#### Recent publications show UK DCTN studies continue to help inform clinical practice

The APRICOT study results showed that Anakinra is not a useful treatment for palmoplantar pustulosis and highlighted the need for further research in this area. The SPOT study showed that a larger scale trial of SCC prevention is feasible in organ transplant patients; and that Flurouracil was more effective than 5% Imiquimod and sunscreen at clearing actinic keratinocytes (AKs) and preventing new AKs from forming. A summary of both these publications can be found on pages 5-6.

### Newly funded research

#### Funding confirmed for new studies

We're delighted to let you know that study teams have been successful in securing funding from various National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) funding streams. BEACON will investigate systemic and biologic treatments for moderate to severe adult eczema using a 'platform' approach, TIGER is assessing the role of food allergy testing in paediatric eczema, and there is also a programme grant on the self-management of acne. See page 11 for further details.

### Feasibility study success

#### Work to inform the development of three clinical trials is completed

The OASIS pilot study has completed and will be published in 2022. This observational study and survey work has been crucial to the development of the EXCISE study on infection rates after the removal of ulcerated skin cancers. Feasibility work for the CANVAS study (investigating different suture types for skin surgery) is also complete. The TEST study has been published (see page 6) and has demonstrated that it is feasible to recruit, randomize and retain children with eczema from primary care into a trial of food allergy screening.

### Recruitment complete

#### **Studies complete recruitment in the pandemic**

It's a huge testament to the commitment of the study teams and recruiting centres involved that the ALPHA (hand eczema), SAFA (adult female acne) and THESEUS (hidradenitis suppurativa) studies all completed their recruitment in 2021. A huge congratulations to all involved. Further details on page 12.

### Results coming soon

#### **Results from two childhood eczema studies available soon**

The TREAT (ciclosporin vs methotrexate for severe eczema in children) and BEE (Best Emollient for childhood Eczema) studies are now complete with study results due to be published during the next 12 months.

### Research capacity building

#### **New activities after Covid-related pause**

It has been wonderful to see the re-launch of our UK DCTN Fellowships and Trainee Groups which were suspended in 2020 due to the pandemic. We have been really pleased to see that the level of interest in these programmes is still high. Full information can be found on pages 15-17 along with details of some new related activities.

### Public service award

#### **UK DCTN Chair Professor Hywel Williams awarded OBE**

We are delighted to report that UK DCTN Chair, Prof Hywel Williams, was awarded an Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the June 2021 Queen's Birthday Honours List for services to higher education and medical research. The award recognises his outstanding contribution to the field of dermatology, and his service to the NIHR, both as former Director of the Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Programme; and through his contribution to the pandemic in helping to manage the NIHR Covid-19 research response.

## STUDIES PUBLISHED IN 2021



### APRICOT trial results

This NIHR Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation (EME) funded study evaluated the efficacy of Anakinra (a human recombinant IL-1 receptor antagonist) in palmoplantar pustulosis (PPP).

#### What did we do?

The study team conducted a randomised controlled trial (RCT) testing Anakinra for adults who have PPP and require systemic therapy. Anakinra or placebo were self-administered via daily subcutaneous injections for eight weeks. In total 64 people were enrolled (31 active arm; 33 placebo arm). The primary objective was to determine whether Anakinra improved disease severity in the treatment of adults with palmoplantar pustulosis, as assessed by the PP-PASI. Secondary outcomes included participant-reported measures of efficacy and safety measures. Bio sampling on participants in APRICOT, and the sister study PLUM (Pustular psoriasis: eLucidating Underlying Mechanisms) aims to investigate mechanisms driving disease and treatment response.

#### What did the trial find out?

This study concluded: "No substantial evidence for the superiority of Anakinra was found. IL-1 blockade is not a useful intervention for the treatment of PPP."

There was no evidence that an eight-week treatment policy of Anakinra was superior to placebo. For the treatment of PPP IL-1 blockade is not a useful intervention. Exploratory mechanistic studies suggest that there are multiple different immune pathways activated in PPP supporting the trial finding that blocking IL-1 alone is not an effective treatment strategy.

#### What does this mean for people with palmoplantar pustulosis?

PPP remains an area of high unmet need and further research is recommended to:

- i) Identify new drug targets.
- ii) Determine the contributory role of drug exposure (including pharmacokinetics and adherence).
- (iii) Validate outcome measures in palmoplantar pustulosis.

The clinical data and samples collected through APRICOT and the ongoing PLUM study, along with the established network of people with PPP (who have stated interest in future trials), provide the vital resource needed to achieve these research objectives.

Full paper: [doi.org/10.1111/bjd.20653](https://doi.org/10.1111/bjd.20653)



## SPOT study results

### What did we do?

This small RCT (funded by the NIHR Research for Patient Benefit Programme) aimed to establish the feasibility of running a clinical trial evaluating SCC prevention for organ transplant patients using topical creams (5-Flurouracil, 5% Imiquimod, sunscreen) for AKs (actinic keratinocytes).

### What did the trial find out?

The SPOT Trial included 40 organ transplant patients who had a total of 903 AKs. People in the trial were asked to use the treatments in two courses, each course lasting four weeks, with a four week break in between. The results found most patients were willing to be randomised, completed the treatment and were willing to use the treatments again in the future. 5-Flurouracil was more effective than 5% Imiquimod and sunscreen at clearing AKs and preventing new AKs from forming.

### What does this mean for people with AKs or skin cancer?

Valuable data on acceptability and the type of treatments patients would be willing to use has been collected and can now be used to inform a larger trial. The study showed that trials of topical AK treatments in organ transplant patients for SCC chemoprevention are feasible and AK activity results support further investigation in future phase III trials.

Full paper: [doi/10.1111/bjd.20974](https://doi.org/10.1111/bjd.20974)



## TEST study results

### What did we do?

This feasibility RCT (funded by the NIHR School for Primary Care) included economic scoping and a qualitative study and aimed to evaluate whether structured allergy history plus food allergy testing and advice can reduce the severity of eczema in children. The main objective was to determine whether a clinical trial comparing test-guided dietary advice versus usual care in the management of eczema was feasible. Eighty-four children aged between 3 months and 5 years with mild-to-severe eczema were recruited. Participants undertook skin prick tests with dietary advice for cow's milk, hen's egg, wheat, peanut, cashew and codfish.

### What did the trial find out?

This trial found that it is possible to recruit, randomize and retain children with eczema from primary care into a trial of food allergy screening. However, some changes to recruitment and inclusion criteria are needed. The study team are now preparing a full RCT (TIGER; see page 12).

Full paper: [doi.org/10.1111/cea.13816](https://doi.org/10.1111/cea.13816)

## THE TRUSTEES

We are a Registered Charity with Trustees who oversee and guide our activities. They have a wealth of experience in dermatology and clinical research, and each one of them volunteer their time and knowledge to further dermatology research within the NHS. Our Trustees and Patient Representatives work together as the UK DCTN Executive Committee. Thanks are extended to Carsten Flohr who stepped down as a Trustee in 2021 when his term of office ended. We welcome our new member, Rubeta Matin.



**Stephen Jones**  
Independent  
Chair



**Hywel Williams**  
Chair of the  
UK DCTN



**Carron Layfield**  
Treasurer



**Kim Thomas**  
Prof of Applied  
Dermatology



**Fiona Cowdell**  
Prof of Nursing



**Rubeta Matin**  
Consultant  
Dermatologist



**Nick Levell**  
Consultant  
Dermatologist

## PATIENT REPRESENTATIVES



**Tim Burton**



**Louisa Adams**



**Jez Frankel**



## THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Members of the UK DCTN Steering Committee meet three times per year to provide feedback on submitted research proposals and advice to studies in development as well as ongoing trials. The Steering Committee includes the Trustees and Patient Representatives and our UK DCTN Fellows (see page 15) join the group for the duration of their award.



Many thanks to Steering Committee members Agustin Martin-Clavijo, Susannah George, John Ingram and Louise Griffiths whose terms of office came to an end in 2021.

### Brighton

Claudia de Giovanni (D)

### Bristol

Debbie Shipley (D)

### Cardiff

Rachel Abbott (D)

### Chester

Evelyn Davies (D)/

Rhiannon Llewellyn (D)

### Exeter

Carolyn Charman (D)/

Yusur Al-Niami (D)

### Glasgow

Areti Makrygeorgou (D)

### London

Gayathri Perera (D)

Sarah Worboys (GP)

Mary Sommerlad

(D) Sharon Belmo

(D)

### Norwich

Abby Macbeth (D)

Tracey Sach (H)

### Nottingham

Lucy Bradshaw (S)

Joanne Chalmers (T)

Hywel Williams (C, D)

### Oxford

Tess McPherson (D)

### Salford

Helen Young (D)

Key:

Chair (C); Dermatologist (D); GP (G); Health Economist (H); Statistician (S); Trial Development Manager (T)

## THE TRIAL GENERATION AND PRIORITISATION PANEL (TGPP)

**Our panel of experts review each research proposal for its suitability and readiness to go to the Steering Committee.**

### Panel Members

Rubeta Matin  
(Chair)  
Alison Layton  
Alana Durack  
Alia Ahmed  
Antonia  
Lloyd-Lavery  
Kathy Radley  
Rosalind  
Simpson  
Aaron Wernham  
Nadine  
Marrouche  
Alison Sears  
Jason Thomson  
Lucy Bradshaw  
Esther  
Burden-Teh  
Fiona Collier

### Research proposals considered during 2021

There are three pathways to submit a research idea: early outline, full vignette or fast-track (the latter to fit with funder deadlines). The following ideas were considered by the TGPP and/or Steering Committee during the past 12 months:

#### Studies submitted as early outline:

- What is the treatment (cost) effectiveness, impact on patient quality of life and treatment safety of narrow band UV phototherapy in atopic eczema? (Carsten Flohr and John Fergusson, London and Sally Ibbotson, Dundee)

#### Studies submitted as full vignette:

- What is the effect of an adjunctive 'Walk and Talk' intervention for people with psoriasis on social connectedness? (Sandy McBride and Sharleen Hill, London)
- For people with low-risk BCC, is clinic-based diagnostic punch biopsy followed by observation, not inferior to standard pragmatic ablative treatment, in terms of skin cancer specific quality of life? (Jeremy Rodriguez and Rubeta Matin, Oxford)
- Does the use of AI algorithm web application improve the skin cancer diagnostic accuracy and appropriateness of two week wait referrals of general practitioners for patients presenting with suspected skin cancer compared with standard of care? (Zenas Yui, Manchester)
- Do steroids improve outcomes in patients with cellulitis? (Fergus Hamilton, Bristol)

#### Studies submitted on fast-track route:

- Proactive versus reactive therapy for the prevention of lichen sclerosus exacerbation and progression of disease. (Rosalind Simpson and Kim Thomas, Nottingham)
- Is it feasible and acceptable to implement a closely remotely monitored biologic treat-to-target strategy for psoriasis remission in real world practice? (Satveer Mahil, London)
- Is reduced daily dose isotretinoin non-inferior in clinical effectiveness compared to standard dose isotretinoin for the treatment of severe acne? (Esther Burden-Teh and Kim Thomas, Nottingham)
- Is a shorter course of oral flucloxacillin as effective as a longer course in the initial treatment of lower limb cellulitis in primary care? (Nick Francis, Southampton)

## TRIAL DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE

We have been busy working with trial development teams and Clinical Trial Units across the UK to create high quality, fundable trial proposals.

Study	Stage of Development
<b>PEARLS</b> Proactive v reactive therapy for the prevention of lichen sclerosus exacerbation and progression of disease (Rosalind Simpson & Kim Thomas, Nottingham)	Full application submitted to NIHR HTA (Health Technology Assessment)*
<b>COAT</b> Is a shorter course of oral flucloxacillin as effective as a longer course in initial treatment of lower limb cellulitis in primary care? (Nick Francis,	Full application submitted to NIHR HTA*
<b>RAPID</b> Citizen Science eczema programme grant (Kim Thomas, Nottingham)	Full application submitted to NIHR Programme Grant scheme*
<b>ACNE-ID</b> Low dose isotretinoin for acne (Esther Burden-Teh & Kim Thomas, Nottingham)	Outline application submitted to NIHR HTA*
<b>HEALS</b> Healing of excisional wounds on lower legs by secondary intention (Jane Nixon, Leeds, Aaron Wernham West Mids and David Veitch, Leicester)	Outline application ready for submission to NIHR HTA¶
<b>SCC-AFTER</b> Adjuvant radiotherapy for high-risk SCC (Agata Rembielak, Manchester & Catherine Harwood, London)	Outline application ready for submission to NIHR HTA¶
<b>EXCISE</b> Is oral antibiotic treatment effective in preventing Surgical Site Infection (SSI) after excision of an ulcerated skin cancer? If so, is a single dose of antibiotic treatment no worse than a 7-day course of antibiotic treatment in preventing SSI? (Rachel Abbott & Emma Thomas-Jones, Cardiff)	Planning outline application to NIHR HTA Sept 2022¶
<b>COUNT</b> Chemoprevention Of skin cancer Using Nicotinamide in Organ Transplant recipients (Rubeta Matin, Oxford)	Development ongoing
<b>CANVAS</b> Are superficial absorbable sutures non-inferior to superficial non-absorbable sutures? (Aaron Wernham West Mids & David Veitch, Leicester)	Feasibility work complete (development of main study on hold)

Key: \* Commissioned Call ¶ Investigator Led

## NEWLY FUNDED STUDIES

The following studies now have funding confirmed and will be in various stages of study set-up throughout 2022.



### **Best systemic treatments for adults with atopic eczema over the long term**

BEACON is an NIHR HTA funded randomised, assessor-blind trial comparing ciclosporin, methotrexate, dupilumab and abrocitinib. The aim of this head-to-head trial is to establish the comparative effectiveness, tolerability, and cost-effectiveness of four key treatments used to treat moderate to severe eczema in adults. BEACON will be set up as a multi-arm multi-stage platform trial capable of adding new arms as novel therapies emerge and will be, to our knowledge, the first of its kind globally in dermatology. The trial will run in collaboration with the National Eczema Society and other patient partners and Chief Investigators (CIs) for the study are Catherine Smith and Andrew Pink (London). The study is due to commence recruitment in 2022; to find out more see the study website [beacontrial.org](http://beacontrial.org) or email [beacon@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:beacon@kcl.ac.uk).

### **Acne Programme Grant - Developing and testing an online intervention to support self-management, improve outcomes and reduce antibiotic use in acne**

This NIHR funded five-year programme of research aims to improve outcomes for mild/moderate acne by promoting use of effective treatments and reducing overuse of long-term oral antibiotics which will be supported by the development of an online intervention for self-management. Due to commence in 2022, it is co-led by Ingrid Muller and Miriam Santer (Southampton) with many other UK DCTN members involved including Kim Thomas, Matt Ridd, Alison Layton, Sinead Langan, Andrew Thompson and Tracey Sach.

### **TIGER - Trial of IGe tests for eczema relief**

The TIGER study is an NIHR HTA-funded study designed to establish whether dietary advice based on food allergy tests improves disease control in children (<2 years) with eczema. This RCT follows on from the TEST feasibility study, reported on page 7. Recruitment will take place at 84 GP surgeries, and children will be randomised to "usual care" or "test guided dietary advice". Skin prick tests will evaluate common allergy-causing foods (milk, egg, wheat, and soya) and parents will be advised to exclude or include one or more foods for one month. The primary outcome is parent-reported eczema control (using RECAP) over six months. The trial is being led by Matt Ridd at the University of Bristol, in partnership with the Universities of Southampton, Manchester, Nottingham, Edinburgh and Imperial College London. Participant randomisation is expected to start in January 2023. If you are interested in this trial, please email: [tiger-study@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:tiger-study@bristol.ac.uk).

## ONGOING CLINICAL TRIALS

These are managed by various Clinical Trials Units around the UK and are at different stages of follow up. Thanks to the commitment and dedication of study teams and recruiting sites involved, three studies recruited to target in the past year - ALPHA, THESEUS and SAFA.



**ALPHA** | NIHR HTA funded RCT investigating the best treatment for hand eczema– alitretinoin vs PUVA (CI Miriam Wittmann, Leeds). This is the largest trial looking at severe hand eczema worldwide. It was a challenge to recruit to this study but on closing it successfully recruited 441 participants (target 455). Results are expected later in 2022.  
[ctru.leeds.ac.uk/alpha/](http://ctru.leeds.ac.uk/alpha/)



**THESEUS** | NIHR HTA funded prospective cohort study which aims to answer the question 'What are the best management options for hidradenitis suppurativa (HS) when first line treatments fail?' The purpose of this project is to inform the design of future HS trials and understand how HS treatments are currently used. (CI John Ingram, Cardiff). THESEUS recruited to target this year, recruiting 150 patients in total. Study videos explaining the surgical techniques involved have been viewed over 500,000 times. [www.cardiff.ac.uk/centre-for-trials-research/research/studies-and-trials/view/theseus](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/centre-for-trials-research/research/studies-and-trials/view/theseus)



**BEEP** | NIHR HTA funded RCT investigating eczema prevention in newborn babies by applying emollients in the first six months of life (CI Hywel Williams, Nottingham). The primary outcome was eczema prevention at 2 years of age and these results showed that the use of emollients from birth does not prevent eczema from developing in babies with an increased risk of developing eczema. The study is continuing to follow up infants until they are 5 years of age to investigate longer term effects.  
[www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/groups/cebd/projects/1eczema/beep-maintrial.aspx](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/groups/cebd/projects/1eczema/beep-maintrial.aspx)



**SAFA** | This RCT (funded by an NIHR HTA Commissioned Call) is investigating the clinical and cost-effectiveness of spironolactone for moderate or severe persistent acne in adult women (CIs Miriam Santer, Southampton and Alison Layton, Harrogate). The study fully recruited in 2021 with 398 participants in total with social media playing a key role. Results are expected in Autumn 2022.  
[www.southampton.ac.uk/safa/index.page](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/safa/index.page)

## THEMED RESEARCH CALL AWARD

The UK DCTN Themed Call aims to pump-prime research that will inform the development of a clinical trial in a particular area each year. This annual award provides up to £10,000 and applications can include activities related to outcome measures and pilot/ feasibility work including surveys, patient involvement work and qualitative research.

### 2020 Psychological interventions for skin disease

The deadline for applications was extended due to the pandemic, so the award was made in February 2021. A total of eight applications were received with funding awarded to:

- Development of virtual habit reversal intervention material for children with atopic eczema. This study aims to test the feasibility of a 'habit reversal' programme to help reduce the itch/scratch cycle in children with eczema (Susannah Baron, London and Ingrid Muller, Southampton).

### 2021 Paediatric Dermatology



This award was also supported by the National Eczema Society (NES) and the British Society of Paediatric Dermatology (BSPD) hence there were THREE awards of up to £10,000 available in 2021. Six applications were submitted, and funding awards were made to the following projects:

- Acceptability of teleconsultations for follow-up of paediatric eczema, compared to face-to-face consultation (Natalie King-Stokes, West Midlands and the 2021 UK DCTN Paediatric Dermatology Trainee Group).
- Identifying patient-reported screening & assessment instruments for mental health in children/young people with acne and establishing their clinical utility and acceptability for use in acne clinical trials (Damian Wood and Jane Ravenscroft, Nottingham).
- Supporting children and young people's sleep in those with eczema - Survey and Focus Groups (SLEEP Study) (Conor Broderick and Carsten Flohr, London).

### 2022 Genital dermatoses

The theme for the 2022 award is male or female genital skin diseases. There are two £10k awards available, one award supported by the BSSVD for a female only study. The application deadline is 25 July 2022, all enquiries to UK DCTN [ukdctn@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:ukdctn@nottingham.ac.uk).

### 2023 Skin of colour

Looking ahead, our theme for 2023 will be dermatological issues relating to skin of colour. Application enquiries to [ukdctn@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:ukdctn@nottingham.ac.uk).

## RESEARCH PRIORITY SETTING PARTNERSHIPS (PSPs)

We continue to instigate and support skin-related PSPs. These are important exercises to establish what research should be undertaken in the future that is important and will make a difference to both patients and health professionals. Two PSPs are underway, and despite the delays imposed due to the pandemic, have progressed well and will be completed in 2022.

### **Pemphigus & Pemphigoid PSP**

This PSP, led by Karen Harman (Leicester), is supported by experts in the field of blistering skin diseases and patients from the PEM Friends patient support group. The second survey and the final workshop to decide the top ten research priorities for bullous pemphigoid, pemphigus vulgaris and mucous membrane pemphigoid will be conducted in 2022. [nottingham.ac.uk/go/PEM-bsp](https://nottingham.ac.uk/go/PEM-bsp)

### **Skin Cancer Surgery PSP**

This PSP, led by Aaron Wernham (Walsall) and David Veitch (Leicester), aims to identify research priorities for skin cancer surgery. The scope of this PSP is quite broad as it includes all surgical treatments for all types of skin cancer (but does not include all skin cancer treatments). The second survey and final workshop will be run in 2022. This project is funded by the UK DCTN Dermatological Surgery 2019 Themed Call. [skinsurgerytrials.org](https://skinsurgerytrials.org)

### **Hyperhidrosis PSP**

This PSP was led by Louise Dunford (Leicester) and funded by a UK DCTN pump-priming award. As a consequence of the PSP, the core team at De Montfort University Leicester have established a Hyperhidrosis Research Network which aims to share research and information with both health professionals and people with hyperhidrosis. Louise is also working on a Cochrane systematic review on hyperhidrosis. [hyperhidrosis.our.dmu.ac.uk](https://hyperhidrosis.our.dmu.ac.uk)

“The UK DCTN funding really helped a lot with getting this (review underway). As many of the top ten questions can potentially be addressed by the review, but also because it (the PSP) helped me develop such a great network of people with hyperhidrosis, so I had lots of support for the grant application. We asked for volunteers for the focus groups we will have as part of the review”.

Louise Dunford, De Montfort University, Leicester

## RESEARCH CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING

The UK DCTN has invested in developing dermatology research leaders of the future via innovative schemes including our annual Fellowship awards and research Trainee Groups which are held every two to three years. New initiatives include a virtual journal club and educational activities for the dermatology nursing community.

### UK DCTN Fellowships

UK DCTN Fellowships are open to applications from Dermatology Specialist Registrars (SpRs), clinicians pursuing the Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration pathway (CESR), General Practitioners (GPs) and nurses/pharmacists. These awards are made on an annual basis and Fellows obtain training and experience in trial development and critical appraisal over a two- or three-year period. To date, 65 research fellowships have been awarded and many alumni have since assumed significant leadership roles in Network activities and in promoting evidence-based dermatology.

### 2021 Fellowship awards

GP Fellowship	Anjali Pathak (Herts)
CESR Fellowship	Hannah Wainman (Glos)
Nurse/Pharmacist Fellowship	Christina MacNeil (Glasgow)
SpR Fellowships	Richard Barlow* (West Mids), Marianne de Brito (London) and John Frewen (Devon).

\*Neil Cox Award for highest scoring applicant

“It has been an absolute pleasure working with you all at the UK DCTN and I have really enjoyed getting involved with multiple projects. I am delighted that I was able to set up the UK DCTN virtual journal club and I will continue to support the new team with this wonderful learning opportunity particularly for those who do not get regular access to a journal club. My three-year fellowship has been a fantastic experience and I have learnt so much and I am excited to continue evidenced based dermatology in the future.” Fiona Tasker 2018 UK DCTN SpR Fellow

“Thank you everything you've done to support me through the Fellowship - I've learned so much and it's also been good fun along the way. I look forward to continue supporting the UK DCTN and staying in touch.”  
Bayanne Olabi 2018 UK DCTN SpR Fellow



## UK DCTN Trainee Groups

The UK DCTN Trainee Groups programme is held every two to three years and aims to help Dermatology Trainees achieve required research competencies and develop skills in clinical research methodology. The scheme requires participants to work in small groups under the guidance of experienced mentors to develop clinical research ideas and includes two training days on clinical research skills. The groups are encouraged to publish their work and move their ideas forward into the UK DCTN trial development pipeline if feasible.



2021 UK DCTN Trainee Surgery Group

Fourteen trainees took part in the 2021 UK DCTN Trainee Groups programme developing projects across themes of medical dermatology, paediatric dermatology and skin surgery as outlined below. All teams are continuing to develop their ideas.

### Medical Dermatology Group

Do patients over 18 with anogenital psoriasis have improved outcomes in health-related quality of life with an addition of psychological intervention alongside standard medical therapy?

Mentors: Rosalind Simpson, Alison Sears, Alia Ahmed

Trainees: Dijon Millette, Priya Patel, Christiana Stavrou, Aarthy Uthayakumar

### Paediatric Dermatology Group

Are teleconsultations as clinically effective and acceptable to patients/clinicians as face-to-face consultations for the follow-up management of paediatric eczema?

Mentors: Lea Solmon, Susannah George, Esther Burden-Teh

Trainees: Manrup Hunjan, Aoife Daly, Anusuya Kawsar, Natalie King, Sarah McCusker

### Skin Surgery Group

Is secondary Intention Healing equivalent/superior to Full thickness Skin Graft for wounds of Keratinocyte skin cancers excisions on the scalp?

Mentors: Aaron Wernham, Rachel Abbott, Claudia Degiovanni

Trainees: Iqra Ashraf, Richard Barlow, William Hunt, Dushyanth Gnanappiragasam, Jasmine Mann

## Virtual journal club for dermatology trainees

Our fantastic UK DCTN SpR Fellows organised a programme of online journal club sessions for trainees, which were held bi-monthly during 2020/ 2021.

Aims of the UK DCTN virtual journal club are:

- To encourage dermatology health care professionals to read and appraise publications critically.
- To empower them to do so by teaching critical appraisal skills.
- To highlight new findings that could change clinical care.
- To offer an opportunity to reflect on practice, discuss controversies and share insights and ideas in a relaxed and safe lifelong learning setting.
- To generate ideas for future research.



An online journal club session

Each of the 20/21 sessions focused on a different type of study and covered randomised controlled trials, cohort studies, systematic reviews, case control studies and qualitative research studies. Useful resources are available, please see [ukdctn.org/journal-club/index.aspx](https://ukdctn.org/journal-club/index.aspx). Further sessions will continue in 2022.

## Educational activities for nurses

In addition to our UK DCTN Nurse/Pharmacist Fellowship we have established a working group with representation from both the UK DCTN and British Dermatology Nursing Group (BDNG) to support and improve learning and development opportunities in clinical research for the dermatology nursing community. Following an initial survey to establish need, we have:

- Delivered a series of educational articles in the BDNG journal Dermatological Nursing covering areas including how different research approaches are used to answer different types of research questions; critical appraisal; and demystifying statistics.
- Delivered a series of accompanying online learning sessions.
- Expanded research resources available on the BDNG website.

Working groups members are Fiona Cowdell, Kathy Radley, Melanie Westmoreland, Alison Lowe, Rubeta Matin, Maggie McPhee and Carron Layfield.

## KEY PUBLICATIONS

### **Anakinra for Palmoplantar Pustulosis: Results from a Randomized, Double-Blind, Multicentre, Two-Staged, Adaptive Placebo-Controlled Trial (Apricot)**

S Cro, VR Cornelius, AE Pink, R Wilson, A Pushpa-Rajah, P Patel, A Abdul-Wahab, S August, J Azad, G Becher, A Chapman, G Dunnill, AD Ferguson, A Fogo, SA Ghaffar, JR Ingram, S Kavakleiva, E Ladoyanni, JA Leman, AE Macbeth, A Makrygeogou, R Parslew, AJ Ryan, A Sharma, AR Shipman, C Sinclair, R Wachsmuth, RT Woolf, A Wright, H Mcateer, J Barker, AD Burden, CEM Griffiths, NJ Reynolds, RB Warren, HJ Lachmann, F Capon, and CH Smith.  
Br J Dermatol. 2021

[doi.org/10.1111/bjd.20653](https://doi.org/10.1111/bjd.20653)

"No evidence for the superiority of Anakinra was found. IL-1 blockade is not a useful intervention for the treatment of PPP."

### **The Surgical Management of Hidradenitis Suppurativa in the United Kingdom: A National Survey of Care Pathways Informing the Theseus Study**

R Howes, JR Ingram, KS Thomas, F Collier, and JN Rodrigues.

J Plast Reconstr Aesthet Surg. 2021

[doi.org/10.1016/j.bjps.2021.08.038](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bjps.2021.08.038)

"This survey demonstrated variation in care, which is likely to be undesirable. Surgeons treating HS patients might consider developing MDTs or referring patients to those with an interest in HS and considering routine outcome measurement. Such steps might reduce variation, increase standardisation of care and improve access to specific treatments."

### **Thematic Synthesis of the Experiences of People with Hidradenitis Suppurativa: A Systematic Review**

L Howells, N Lancaster, M Mcphee, C Bundy, JR Ingram, P Leighton, K Henaghan-Sykes, and KS Thomas.

Br J Dermatol. 2021

[doi.org/10.1111/bjd.20523](https://doi.org/10.1111/bjd.20523)

"There needs to be improvements in clinical care to allow people with HS to live their lives more fully."

### **Evidence-Based Management of Eczema: Five Things That Should Be Done More and Five Things That Should Be Dropped**

B Olabi, and HC Williams.

Curr Opin Allergy Clin Immunol. 2021

[doi.org/10.1097/aci.0000000000000750](https://doi.org/10.1097/aci.0000000000000750)

"New evidence-based insights on existing and newer treatments allow clinicians the opportunity to change their practice in a way that enhances patients' quality of life."

### **Test-guided dietary management of eczema in children: A randomized controlled feasibility trial (TEST)**

Matthew J. Ridd, Douglas Webb, Kirsty Roberts, Miriam Santer, Joanne R.

Chalmers, Anna Gilbertson, Deb

Marriage, Peter S. Blair, Nicholas L.

Turner, Kirsty Garfield, Joanna Coast.

Clinical & Experimental Allergy. 2021

[doi.org/10.1111/cea.13816](https://doi.org/10.1111/cea.13816)

"It is possible to recruit, randomize and retain children with eczema from primary care into a trial of food allergy screening and to collect the outcomes of interest. Changes to recruitment and inclusion criteria are needed in a definitive trial, to ensure inclusion of younger children from more diverse backgrounds."

## CONTACTS

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