



# UK DERMATOLOGY CLINICAL TRIALS NETWORK

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## ANNUAL REPORT 2023

### Highlights:

- SAFA acne study results in BMJ
- New funding for acne, skin cancer and cellulitis studies
- TREAT eczema study results published
- New Chair and Deputy Chairs appointed



## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to our UK DCTN network newsletter. So much to say and so little space and time, but here goes.

### Musical chairs

As most members know, Hywel Williams has now stepped down from chairing the UK DCTN after a 20-year stint and has been succeeded by Beth Stuart. Beth is Professor of Medical Statistics at Queen Mary University of London where she directs the Pragmatic Clinical Trials Unit.

Two deputy chairs have also been appointed to bring in different skills and views: Evelyn Davies a Consultant Dermatologist from Chester and Zenas Yiu an NIHR Clinical Lecturer based in Manchester. Special thanks are made to Nick Levell who acted as Network Chair when Hywel was away due to illness and all those who stepped up to keep the network alive and well.

### Reminder of our values

It is easy to forget why the network was formed and why we are needed, so here is a reminder:

- 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 when designing and conducting clinical 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.

### In this report

You will find news about the completion of two major national trials supported by the UK DCTN, SAFA and TREAT, which exemplify the UK DCTN core values outlined above. Then you can read about newly funded trials including Heals2, Acne-ID and SCC-After and studies at both later and earlier stages of development to see what's coming in the study pipeline. You can also find out more about our research capacity building initiatives including the UK DCTN journal club - be sure to join in and enjoy learning with us.

### This is your network

Remember that we are a friendly and open network and that we respect all ideas for trials and promotion of evidence-based dermatology to improve patient care. Do let your colleagues know about the UK DCTN. Not everyone will want to lead a trial, but everyone can help comment on the importance of questions and issues such as feasibility. As always, we are grateful to the British Association of Dermatology for their unfailing support to the Network.

Beth Stuart (new UK DCTN chair) and Hywel Williams (outgoing UK DCTN Chair)



## ABOUT THE UK DCTN

The UK Dermatology Clinical Trials Network (UK DCTN) was established in 2002 by Professor Hywel Williams and a group of dermatologists and patient representatives with the aim of providing better evidence for the treatment and prevention of skin disease. Its focus is to develop independent clinical trials and improve research capacity in the dermatology community.

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, and general practitioners.

### Our team:

We are a small team based at the UK DCTN Co-ordinating Centre, Centre of Evidence Based Dermatology, University of Nottingham who work with investigators across the country to:

- Support the development of research ideas into fundable research proposals.
- Provide training and capacity building in applied dermatology research.
- Offer small funding grants to help pump-prime dermatology research in the UK.



Laura Howells  
Trial Development  
Manager



Carron Layfield  
Network  
Manager



Maggie Mcphee  
Research  
Co-ordinator

Remember, it has always been **FREE to join** the Network 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)

## 2023 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 and prestigious awards for completed studies. We're also celebrating our new team and recipients of our Honorary Lifetime Membership Awards.

### Results in print

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

The SAFA study showed that spironolactone is an effective treatment for adult female acne and good alternative to antibiotics. The TREAT study showed methotrexate is a useful and safe treatment in paediatric patients with severe eczema and a good alternative to ciclosporin. A summary of both these publications can be found on pages 5-6.

### Newly funded research

#### Funding confirmed for new studies in acne, skin cancer and cellulitis

We're delighted to let you know that a number of study teams have been successful in securing funding from various National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) funding streams. ACNE-ID will investigate lower dose isotretinoin for acne and HEALS2 the usefulness of compression healing after the removal of skin cancers from the lower leg. SCC-AFTER is exploring whether adding in a course of radiotherapy following surgery in 'high-risk' squamous cell carcinoma patients will help prevent local recurrence while DEXACELL is looking at the role of dexamethasone in the treatment of cellulitis. See page 9-10 for details of these and other studies in set-up.

### Feasibility study success

#### Feasibility studies published

The HS cohort study THESEUS I has been published and shown that a trial utilising surgical and laser approaches for the treatment of HS is feasible in the UK. Results from the EXCISE and CANVAS skin cancer feasibility studies have also been published this year (page 7).

### First recruits for new studies

#### Eczema and cellulitis studies recruit first patients

It's been great to see the TIGER eczema study and COAT cellulitis study move forward from set-up stage and open to recruitment. Both studies celebrated recruiting their first patients this year and further details on these and other on-going studies are available on page 8.

**Prestigious  
Award for  
UK DCTN  
study**

## **BEE eczema study awarded RCGP Paper of the Year**

Congratulations to the Best Emollient for Eczema (BEE) study team (led by Prof Matt Ridd, Bristol) who were awarded the Winner of the Research Paper of the Year by the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) conference. The BEE study (featured in our 2022 report) compared lotions, creams, gels and ointments used to treat childhood eczema and found no difference in the effectiveness or safety between the four emollient types, leading the authors to conclude that the right moisturiser for children is the one that they like to use.

**Research  
Capacity  
Building**

## **Welcoming our new UK DCTN Fellows**

Five UK DCTN Fellowships were awarded this year – three to dermatology trainees and two to nurses. Please see pages 15-16 for further details including information on our online journal club.

**Honorary  
Lifetime  
Membership  
Awards**

## **Celebrating significant contribution to the UK DCTN**

We instigated our Honorary Lifetime Membership Awards as part of our 20<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations last year to help recognise sustained and significant contributions to the UK DCTN. Congratulations to Prof Alison Layton and Prof Andrew Finlay who received this year's awards at our 2023 AGM.

**Changes to  
the  
UK DCTN  
leadership  
team**

## **And finally, when thank you doesn't seem quite enough.....**

2023 has seen significant changes to the UK DCTN leadership team and after 20 years at the helm we've said goodbye to Prof Hywel Williams as UK DCTN Chair. Thank you doesn't quite seem enough for the leadership and transformation that Hywel has brought to applied dermatology research during this time. We're pleased to let you know that Hywel is remaining as a member of both the UK DCTN Steering and Executive Committees until the end of 2026. Prof Nick Levell has also stepped down as UK DCTN Deputy Chair and we are so incredibly grateful for the dedication and support he provides to the network.

Please join us in welcoming our wonderful new leadership team – Prof Beth Stuart as UK DCTN Chair supported by Deputy Chairs Dr Evelyn Davies and Dr Zenas Yiu. They bring a tremendous amount of experience and enthusiasm for taking the UK DCTN forward into the future and you can find out more about them on page 17.

## STUDIES PUBLISHED IN 2023



### TREAT Eczema Trial RESULTS

Chief Investigator: Prof. Carsten Flohr, London

#### What did they do?

This randomised controlled trial investigated the use of ciclosporin vs methotrexate for severe eczema in children. Over 100 patients aged 2-16 years old (who didn't respond to potent topical treatments for their eczema) took part in this study which recruited from 13 hospitals across the UK and Ireland.

Patients were provided with either oral ciclosporin (52 children) or methotrexate (51 children) and were treated for 9 months and then followed up for another 6 months after stopping treatment. The study team measured how each patient's eczema responded to the medication with both doctor and patient-assessed severity and quality of life measures.

#### What did the trial find out?

The study showed that both ciclosporin and methotrexate are effective treatments for severe childhood eczema over a period of 36 weeks. Ciclosporin was found to work faster and reduced disease severity earlier (at 12 weeks) but is more expensive. Whereas methotrexate was significantly cheaper and led to better objective disease control beyond 12 weeks and even after treatment had stopped. The results demonstrated that although ciclosporin works more quickly initially, a more sustained treatment response is seen with methotrexate. There were also no concerning safety signals.

#### What does this mean for people with eczema?

Methotrexate is a useful and safe treatment in paediatric patients with severe atopic dermatitis and a good alternative to ciclosporin, especially in settings where health care resources are limited.

#### **Efficacy and safety of ciclosporin versus methotrexate in the treatment of severe atopic dermatitis in children and young people (TREAT)**

Carsten Flohr, Anna Rosala-Hallas, Ashley P Jones, Paula Beattie, Susannah Baron, Fiona Browne, Sara J Brown, Joanna E Gach, Danielle Greenblatt, Ross Hearn, Eva Hilger, Ben Esdaile, Michael J Cork, Emma Howard, Marie-Louise Lovgren, Suzannah August, Farhiya Ashoor, Paula R Williamson, Tess McPherson, Donal O'Kane, Jane Ravenscroft, Lindsay Shaw, Manish D Sinha, Catherine Spowart, Leonie S Taams, Bjorn R Thomas, Mandy Wan, Tracey H Sach, Alan D Irvine.

**BJD September 2023**

<https://doi.org/10.1093/bjd/ljad281>

Study website: [www.treat-trial.org.uk/](http://www.treat-trial.org.uk/)

Video explaining the study results: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1Lm\\_fmAEio](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1Lm_fmAEio)

This study was funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Efficacy and Mechanisms of Efficacy funding programme.

## SAFA Acne Trial RESULTS

Chief Investigators: Prof. Miriam Santer, Southampton and Prof. Alison Layton, Harrogate.



### What did they do?

This study investigated the clinical and cost-effectiveness of spironolactone for moderate or severe persistent acne in adult women. It successfully recruited 410 female patients.

### What did the trial find out?

The study shows that spironolactone is an effective treatment for adult female acne. The study recruited over 400 women, aged over 18, with acne that had persisted for more than 6 months and where oral antibiotics would have normally been the next treatment. Half were randomly allocated to take spironolactone, while the other half were given a placebo. The women were asked to complete questionnaires on their acne and quality of life relating to the condition at the start of the trial and then at 12 and 24 weeks into their treatment.

The results showed that the women taking spironolactone saw a significant improvement in their acne after 12 and 24 weeks compared to those on the placebo. A significantly higher proportion also reported that they felt satisfied that their skin had been helped compared with those receiving placebo, and any side effects were uncommon and very minor.

### What does this mean for people with acne?

These results show that spironolactone could offer an alternative to antibiotics for many women with persistent acne to use alongside topical acne treatments.

### Effectiveness of spironolactone for women with acne vulgaris (SAFA) in England and Wales

Miriam Santer, Megan Lawrence, Susanne Renz, Zina Eminton, Beth Stuart, Tracey H Sach, Sarah Pyne, Matthew J Ridd, Nick Francis, Irene Soulsby, Karen Thomas, Natalia Permyakova, Paul Little, Ingrid Muller, Jacqui Nuttall, Gareth Griffiths, Kim S Thomas, Alison M Layton.

**BMJ May 2023**

<https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj-2022-074349>

Study website: [www.southampton.ac.uk/safa/index.page](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/safa/index.page)

This study was funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Health Technology Assessment Commissioned Call funding programme.





## THESEUS Study RESULTS

Chief Investigator: Dr John Ingram,  
Cardiff

### What did they do?

A prospective cohort study looking at the best management options for hidradenitis suppurativa (HS). The purpose of this project was to inform the design of future HS trials and understand how HS treatments are currently used. A total of 151 patients were recruited.

### What did the study find out?

Theseus has established laser treatment and deroofting for HS in the UK and demonstrated their popularity with patients and clinicians for future RCTS.

### What next?

The study team are developing a full trial in this area, aiming to submit a funding proposal in 2024.

### Treatment of Hidradenitis Suppurativa Evaluation Study (THESEUS): A prospective cohort study

John R Ingram, Janine Bates, Rebecca Cannings-John, Fiona Collier, Judith Evans, Angela Gibbons, Ceri Harris, Laura Howells, Kerenza Hood, Rachel Howes, Paul Leighton, Muhammad Riaz, Jeremy Rodrigues, Helen Stanton, Kim S Thomas, Emma Thomas-Jones.

**BJD October 2023**

<https://doi.org/10.1093/bjd/ljad388>

Study Website:

[www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/groups/cebd/projects/5rareandother/theseus.aspx](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/groups/cebd/projects/5rareandother/theseus.aspx)

This study was funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Health Technology Assessment Commissioned Call funding programme.

## OTHER KEY PUBLICATIONS

### International, prospective cohort study comparing non-absorbable versus absorbable sutures for skin surgery: CANVAS service evaluation

Alice Lee, Guy H M Stanley, Ryckie G Wade, Daniele Berwick, Victoria Vinicombe, Brogan K Salence, Esra Musbahi, Anderson R C S De Poli, Mihaela Savu, Jonathan M Batchelor, Rachel A Abbott, Matthew D Gardiner, Aaron Wernham, David Veitch

**BJS April 2023**

<https://doi.org/10.1093/bjs/znad008>

### The top 10 research priorities for the treatment of bullous pemphigoid, mucous membrane pemphigoid and pemphigus vulgaris in the UK: results of a James Lind Alliance Priority Setting Partnership

Karen E Harman, Jag Barha, Jo R Chalmers, John K G Dart, Isobel Davies, Patricia Ellis, Douglas Grindlay, Philip J Hampton, Sharleen Hill, Sharon Hockey, Antonia Lloyd-Lavery, Maggie McPhee, Ruth Murphy, Saaeha Rauz, Jane F Setterfield, Ingrid Thompson, Melanie Westmoreland, Christina Waistell

**BJD May 2023**

<https://doi.org/10.1093/bjd/ljad140>

### Establishing clinician and patient perspectives on a proposed trial investigating antibiotics in skin surgery (EXCISE)

Richard Barlow, Emma Thomas-Jones, Chloé Austin, David Gillespie, Rubeta N Matin, Margaret Ogden, Debra Smith, Joshua P Totty, Samuel Kent, Aaron Wernham, Hywel C Williams, Rachel A Abbott

**BJD June 2023**

<https://doi.org/10.1093/bjd/ljad113.266>



## ONGOING STUDIES

These studies are funded via a range of National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) funding streams and managed with support from various Clinical Trials Units across the UK.

### COAT - Cellulitis Optimal Antibiotic Treatment

Is a shorter course of oral flucloxacillin as effective as a longer course in initial treatment of lower limb cellulitis in primary care?



This is a blinded, non-inferiority trial comparing 5 days vs 7 days of flucloxacillin for the treatment of cellulitis. It is recruiting 356 participants from primary care sites across the UK.

Chief Investigator: Prof. Nick Francis, Southampton

Website: <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/ctu/coat-study.page>

Email: [coat@soton.ac.uk](mailto:coat@soton.ac.uk)

### TIGER - Trial of food allergy tests (IgE) for eczema relief

Does food allergy testing improve eczema control?



This study is recruiting 493 children with moderate to severe eczema aged between 3 months and 2 years via GP surgeries. Children will be randomised to "usual care" or "test guided dietary advice" based on the results of food allergy tests.

Chief investigator: Prof. Matthew Ridd, Bristol.

Website: <https://tiger.blogs.bristol.ac.uk/>

Email: [tiger-study@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:tiger-study@bristol.ac.uk)

### Acne Care Online

Developing and testing an online intervention to support self-management, improve outcomes and reduce antibiotic use in acne



This five-year research programme aims to improve outcomes for mild/moderate acne by promoting use of effective treatments and reducing overuse of long-term oral antibiotics. This includes the development of an online intervention for self-management of acne.

Chief Investigators: Dr Ingrid Muller and Prof. Miriam Santer, Southampton.

Website: <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/primarycare/acnecareonline.page>

Email: [acnecare@soton.ac.uk](mailto:acnecare@soton.ac.uk)

### Rapid Eczema Trials

Taking a 'citizen science' approach to eczema research



This five-year programme is investigating new approaches to undertaking studies in mild to moderate eczema. Co-production with patients is key throughout and workstreams include efficient online trials in the NHS, an online platform to allow patient led trials and implementation and process evaluation including work with seldom heard groups.

Chief Investigators: Amanda Roberts and Prof. Kim Thomas, Nottingham.

Website: [rapideczematrials.org](http://rapideczematrials.org)

Email: [eczema@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:eczema@nottingham.ac.uk)

## NEWLY FUNDED and STUDIES IN SET UP

The following clinical trials have received funding from the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) and are at various stages of study set-up.

### BEACON

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



This study will compare ciclosporin, methotrexate and dupilumab in adults with moderate to severe eczema. It will measure the effectiveness, tolerability, and cost-effectiveness of these three key systemic treatments. 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.

Chief Investigators: Prof. Catherine Smith and Dr Andrew Pink, London.

Website: <https://www.beacontrial.org/>

Email: [BEACON@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:BEACON@kcl.ac.uk)

### DEXACELL

Dexamethasone for cellulitis

This trial will investigate whether prescribing dexamethasone alongside antibiotics improves symptoms and reduces the need for further antibiotics and healthcare visits among patients with cellulitis who attend A&E or similar NHS urgent care settings. The study aims to recruit 450 patients.

Chief Investigators: Prof. Ed Carlton and Dr Fergus Hamilton (Bristol)

Email: [UKDCTN@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:UKDCTN@nottingham.ac.uk)

### PEARLS

Proactive vs reactive therapy for the prevention of lichen sclerosus (LS) exacerbation and progression of disease.

This is a 2-arm, parallel-group, randomised, unblinded, multi-centre, superiority trial and aims to recruit 400 females over the age of 5 years affected by LS from secondary care sites across the UK.



Chief Investigators: Dr Rosalind Simpson & Prof. Kim Thomas, Nottingham.

Website: <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/pearls/>

Email: [PEARLS@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:PEARLS@nottingham.ac.uk)

## HEALS2

### Compression therapy for wound healing

This study will compare compression therapy to standard care for the healing of excisional wounds on the lower leg by secondary intention following removal of a keratinocyte skin cancer. The primary objective is to compare the time it takes for the surgical wound to fully heal and the study aims to recruit 396 participants from secondary care skin cancer surgical centres across the UK



Chief investigators: Dr David Veitch, Oxford and Dr Aaron Wernham, West Mids

Funders website: <https://www.fundingawards.nihr.ac.uk/award/NIHR151863>

Email: [heals2@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:heals2@leeds.ac.uk)

## SCC-AFTER

### Adjuvant radiotherapy for high-risk squamous cell carcinoma

This study will look at whether adding a course of radiotherapy following surgery in 'high-risk' patients will help reduce recurrence of squamous cell carcinoma. The study aims to recruit 840 participants who will be randomly allocated to either a course of radiotherapy and active monitoring or active monitoring alone.

Chief investigators: Prof. Catherine Harwood, London and Dr Agata Rembielak, Manchester

Website: <https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/centre-for-trials-research/research/studies-and-trials/view/scc-after>

Email: [SCCAFTER@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:SCCAFTER@cardiff.ac.uk)

## ACNE-ID

### Lower dose isotretinoin for severe acne

This study will be investigating the benefits and harms of a reduced daily dose of oral isotretinoin in the treatment of young people aged 12-24 years with severe acne and will involve the recruitment of 800 participants from 20 sites.



Chief Investigators are Dr Esther Burden-Teh and Prof. Kim Thomas, Nottingham.

Website: <https://www.nctu.ac.uk/our-research/randomised-trials/current-studies/acne-id.aspx>

Email: [acne-id@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:acne-id@nottingham.ac.uk)

## NEW RESEARCH PROPOSALS CONSIDERED DURING 2023

**The TGPP review each research proposal for its suitability and readiness to go to the Steering Committee.**

### Panel Members

Rachel Abbott  
(Chair)  
Alison Layton  
Alia Ahmed  
Antonia Lloyd-Lavery  
Anna Lalonde  
Nadine Marrouche  
Alison Sears  
Lucy Bradshaw  
Esther Burden-Teh  
Paul Leighton  
Shernaz Walton  
Andrew Hodder  
Eleanor Earp  
Alison Lowe  
Simi Sudhakaran  
Andrew Pink  
Jaskiran Azad

### There are three pathways to submit a research idea:

1. Early outline – an idea to 'sound out' with our steering group
2. Full vignette – a firm study proposal for reviewing
3. Fast-track – a study with a potential funder deadline

The following ideas were considered by the Trial Generation and Prioritisation Panel (TGPP) and/or Steering Committee during 2023:

#### Studies submitted as early outline:

- Is intralesional 5-fluorouracil (50 mg/ml, up to 200mg) at least as effective at clearing non-melanoma skin cancer lesions, acceptable to patients and safe as Moh's micrographic surgery or skin surgery requiring graft reconstruction?  
Dr Stephen Smith, Cambridge

#### Studies submitted as full vignette:

- Does use of topical oestrogen either alone or along with potent topical corticosteroids reduce flares and improve quality of life in adult menopausal women with vulval lichen sclerosis?  
Dr Jaskiran Azad, Middlesbrough
- Can we use 'as needed' biologic treatment to sustain disease control and reduce healthcare costs in people with psoriasis?  
Dr Satveer Mahil and Prof. Catherine Smith
- Is laser hair treatment safe and efficacious for moderate to severe hidradenitis suppurativa (HS) when added to adalimumab biosimilar therapy?  
Dr John Ingram, Cardiff

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

- A feasibility study to assess design of a randomised clinical trial of a sedentary interruption intervention to improve health outcomes for patients with psoriasis.  
Dr Helen Young, Manchester

**The UK DCTN is open to trial suggestions from all our members. If you are not experienced in developing and setting up a clinical trial, then we can help.**

## STUDY DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE

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

| Study  | Progress  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>MOVE SMART</b><br/>Does a 'sedentary interruption' intervention have clinical utility in the management of psoriasis?<br/>Dr Helen Young, Manchester</p>   | <p>Submitted for funding<br/>(outline stage,<br/>intervention development)</p>  |
| <p><b>Pyoderma Gangrenosum</b><br/>What are the most effective treatments for pyoderma gangrenosum (infliximab for PG)?<br/>Dr Philip Hampton, Middlesborough</p>  | <p>Feasibility survey completed</p>   |
| <p><b>OPINION</b><br/>Online psychological intervention (compassion focused therapy) for people with vitiligo<br/>Dr Viktoria Eleftheriadou, Birmingham</p>  | <p>In development</p>   |
| <p><b>POWER</b><br/>Utility of topical Oestrogen in the treatment of lichen sclerosus in adult women<br/>Dr Jaskiran Azad, Middlesborough</p>  | <p>In development</p>   |
| <p><b>SPOT-IT</b><br/>SCC prevention in organ transplant patients<br/>Dr Catherine Harwood, London and Dr Rubeta Matin (Oxford)</p>  | <p>Submitted for funding<br/>(full stage, RCT)</p>  |
| <p><b>As needed biologics for psoriasis</b><br/>Patient Led As Needed Treatment for the Management of Chronic Plaque Psoriasis<br/>Dr S Mahil and Prof. Catherine Smith, London</p>                              | <p>Submitted for funding<br/>(outline stage)</p>  |
| <p><b>EXCISE</b><br/>Is oral antibiotic treatment effective in preventing Surgical Site Infection (SSI) after excision of an ulcerated skin cancer?<br/>Dr Rachel Abbott &amp; Dr Emma Thomas-Jones, Cardiff</p> | <p>Submitted for funding<br/>(full stage, RCT)<br/><br/>See page 7 for publication of feasibility results</p>                       |
| <p><b>CANVAS</b><br/>Are superficial absorbable sutures non-inferior to superficial non-absorbable sutures?<br/>Aaron Wernham West Mids &amp; David Veitch, Leicester.</p>                                       | <p>Feasibility work complete<br/>(development of main study on hold)<br/><br/>See page 7 for publication of feasibility results</p> |

## THEMED RESEARCH CALL AWARDS

Our annual themed call awards provide up to £10,000 to research teams undertaking pilot or feasibility work which will help inform the topic or design of a future clinical trial. The theme of the award changes each year in response to the needs of the dermatology community.

### Themed Call Funded Studies Published in 2023

#### CORALS - Core Outcome Set for Lichen Sclerosus

Chief Investigator: Dr Rosalind Simpson, Nottingham



Awarded via a UK DCTN Themed Call in 2018 following a Priority Setting Partnership on lichen sclerosus (LS), this study aimed to establish what aspects of disease ('domains') should be measured in trials of genital LS.

The CORALS study team consulted international stakeholders to agree the core domains that are relevant to all people with genital LS (males, females, adults and children).

The three core domains agreed were:

- clinical (visible) signs
- LS symptoms
- Quality of life specific to LS

Implementation of these core domains into the protocols of clinical trials and systematic reviews will ensure that outcomes of importance to patients and health professionals are measured in future LS research.

We were proud to see this UK DCTN funded study acknowledged as a high quality conducted study. In a BJD published letter titled 'A milestone reached in the standardisation of lichen sclerosus trial outcomes' the study team were congratulated on their work and achievements "the CORALS Core Outcome Set development process is a fine example of a rigorous and transparent consensus process...".

#### **Core outcome domains for lichen sclerosus: a CORALS initiative consensus statement**

Rosalind C Simpson, Gudula Kirtschig, Amanda Selk, Suzanne von Seitzberg, Gitte Vittrup, Ione Bissonnette, Jan Kottner, Jaclyn Lanthier, Chris Stanton, David Foster, Martin Promm, Angelo Augenti, Stefano Lauretti, Kim S Thomas

**BJD January 2023**

<https://doi.org/10.1093/bjd/ljac145>

Study Website:

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/groups/cebd/projects/5rareandother/corals.aspx>

## Ongoing Themed Call Funded Studies

### 2022 Genital Dermatoses

- PsOAR – psoriasis in the anogenital region. A series of online focus groups with people who have a diagnosis of anogenital psoriasis to discuss their experiences and views on treatment options. 2021 UK DCTN Trainee Group: Dr Priya Patel, Dr Christiana Stavrou, Dr Dijon Milette, Dr Aarthi Uthayakumar (mentors Dr Rosalind Simpson, Dr Alia Ahmed, Dr Alison Sears)

### 2021 Paediatric Dermatology (co-funded with National Eczema Society and British Association of Paediatric Dermatology)

- TECH Study - teleconsultations in paediatric eczema. Feasibility work including patient and clinician surveys and focus groups with parents/carers of young children with eczema. 2021 UK DCTN Trainee Group: Dr Natalie King-Stokes, Dr Aoife Daly, Dr Sarah McCusker, Dr Manrup Hunjan (mentors Dr Esther Burden-Teh, Dr Susannah George, Dr Lea Solman)
- PARADES - identifying patient-reported screening & assessment instruments for mental health in children and young people with acne. A scoping review and interviews with patients and carers. Dr Jane Ravenscroft and Dr Damian Wood
- SLEEP Study - supporting children and young people's sleep in those with eczema. A mixed-methods study exploring children's, young people's, parents' and healthcare professionals' experiences and management of sleep disturbance related to eczema. Prof. Carsten Flohr, Dr Ingrid Muller, Dr Conor Broderick, Dr Shona Cameron

### 2020 Psychological Interventions for Skin Disease

- Kids in Control - breaking the itch-scratch cycle. Development of a virtual habit reversal intervention material for children with atopic eczema. Prof. Carsten Flohr, Dr Susannah Baron, Dr Ingrid Muller, Dr Alpa Kanji

## 2024 Themed Call Funding Opportunity - 'Research Uncertainties Identified by Dermatology Priority Setting Partnerships'

We have a very broad themed call for 2024 aimed at supporting the development of dermatology research uncertainties identified by Priority Setting Partnerships (PSPs). Three awards of up to £10,000 each are available with one supported by the British Society of Dermatological Surgery (BSDS) specifically for applications related to research priorities identified by the skin cancer surgery PSP and one by the British Society for Paediatric and Adolescent Dermatology (BSPAD) specifically to support projects in this area.

For a full list of dermatology PSPs and the corresponding research priorities identified please see <https://www.jla.nihr.ac.uk/top-10-priorities/>. The application deadline is Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2024 and for details of how to apply or if you have any queries please get in touch: [ukdctn@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:ukdctn@nottingham.ac.uk).



## 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, research Trainee Groups, educational activities for nurses and virtual journal club for dermatology trainees.

### 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), nurses and 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, over 70 research Fellowships have been awarded and many alumni have since assumed significant leadership roles in Network activities and in promoting evidence-based dermatology.

### UK DCTN Fellowship awards 2023

| SpR Fellows              | Nurse Fellows             |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Christina Ye* (Oxford)   | Becky Dingle (Somerset)   |
| Grace Boyd (Bristol)     | Gemma Whicker (Cambridge) |
| Khaylen Mistry (Norwich) |                           |

\*Neil Cox Award for highest overall scoring applicant

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with the UK DCTN and am still really touched I was given the opportunity. Indeed, I am keen to continue my projects ... I really appreciated your fantastic insights and teaching - very inspirational and made me rediscover my enjoyment for learning. I have since been offered a Mohs fellowship in New Zealand."

Dr Richard Barlow, UK DCTN SpR Fellow 2021-2023

"Thank you so much for being so warm and generous with your teaching and care throughout my two years during the fellowship. I enjoyed it so much and have a much deeper understanding of the process to high quality evidence-based practice and research now. I will stay on with the RAPID trials ... it's a great project I enjoy. I am starting to do some research here and can now put into practice what I've learned."

Dr John Frewen, UK DCTN SpR Fellow 2021-2023

## Virtual Journal Club for Dermatology Trainees

Our fantastic UK DCTN SpR Fellows have continued to organise a programme of online journal club sessions for dermatology trainees and other interested dermatologists.

Aims of the UK DCTN virtual journal club are to:

- Encourage dermatology health care professionals to read and appraise publications critically.
- Empower them to do so by teaching critical appraisal skills.
- Highlight new findings that could change clinical care.
- Offer an opportunity to reflect on practice, discuss controversies and share insights and ideas in a relaxed and safe setting.
- Generate ideas for future research.

The 2023 sessions focused on different types of research, with guest speakers (pictured l-r below) presenting as follows:

- Dr Zenas Yiu – Retrospective cohort studies
- Prof. Sonia Gran – Multi-variate regression analysis
- Dr Charlotte Gollins - Systematic Reviews
- Prof. Beth Stuart – Randomised Controlled Trials

Useful resources including videos and academic papers are available on the journal club web page and further sessions will continue in 2024.

Website: <http://www.ukdctn.org/journal-club/index.aspx>



## UK DCTN GOVERNANCE

### Looking to the future- meet the new UK DCTN Chair and Deputy Chairs



**UK DCTN Chair Prof. Beth Stuart is a** Professor of Medical Statistics at Queen Mary University of London

I am very excited to be taking up the role of UK DCTN Chair. For those I haven't met before, I am a medical statistician and quantitative methodologist. Over my career, I have helped to design and analyse many clinical trials and large cohort studies and I now lead the Pragmatic Clinical Trials Unit at Queen Mary, University of London. I love talking to people about their research and helping them to develop their ideas (and getting stuck into any data at the end, of course!) and have had the good fortune to work with some fantastic investigators and patients on several clinical trials in dermatology. I am delighted to have this opportunity over the next few years to share that experience with, and learn from, the UK DCTN committees and community. We all know that Hywel is irreplaceable. But I can promise to bring all my energy, enthusiasm and knowledge to the role, and I know I'll have great support from the UK DCTN Coordinating Centre and experienced committee members and clinicians. I am very much looking forward to helping UK DCTN to continue the amazing collaborative work that it does, ensuring that dermatology research answers the questions that are important to clinicians and patients, and supporting the next generation of researchers through the fellowship scheme.



**UK DCTN Deputy Chair Dr Evelyn Davies is a** Dermatology Consultant at the Countess of Chester Hospital

Evelyn obtained her medical degree and DPhil in physiology from the University of Oxford. She then moved on to core medical training in North Wales and Merseyside and undertook dermatology training in the Mersey deanery and was the first ever BJD Registrar. Evelyn now works as a general adult dermatologist with interests in research, teaching, phototherapy and service development. She has been a member of the UK DCTN Steering group since 2019.



**UK DCTN Deputy Chair Dr Zenas Yiu is a** Clinical Senior Lecturer in Dermatology and Pharmacoepidemiology at the University of Manchester, and an Honorary Consultant Dermatologist at the Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust.

His clinical and research interests are in the effectiveness and safety of therapeutics for inflammatory skin conditions, and he currently works in regional tertiary clinics for psoriasis and hidradenitis suppurativa. He holds a master's degree in epidemiology and a doctorate degree in pharmaco-epidemiology. Zenas sits on the steering committee for three British Association of Dermatologists (BAD) research registries (psoriasis, alopecia areata, and keratinocyte cancer); and works as the chair and a member for the methotrexate and biologics guideline development groups for the BAD respectively. He also works as an editor for Cochrane Skin and an associate editor for the BJD for guidelines.

## Executive Committee and Trustees

We are a registered charity (charity number 1115745) with Trustees who oversee and guide our activities. They have a wealth of experience in dermatology and clinical research and volunteer their time and expertise to further our research. The Trustees and Patient Representatives work together as the UK DCTN Executive Committee.

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Jane Sterling</b>   | Independent Chair and Consultant Dermatologist                |
| <b>Beth Stuart</b>     | Chair of UK DCTN and Professor of Medical Statistics          |
| <b>Hywel Williams</b>  | Former Chair of UK DCTN and Professor of Dermato-Epidemiology |
| <b>Carron Layfield</b> | Treasurer and Manager of the UK DCTN                          |
| <b>Kim Thomas</b>      | Professor of Applied Dermatology                              |
| <b>Fiona Cowdell</b>   | Professor of Nursing  |
| <b>Rubeta Matin</b>    | Consultant Dermatologist                                      |
| <b>Nick Levell</b>     | Consultant Dermatologist                                      |

### Patient Representatives on Executive and/or Steering Committees:

|                                  |                                   |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Tim Burton</b>                | <b>Clare Baumhauer</b>            |
| <b>Sophie Dove</b> (to Oct 2023) | <b>Louisa Adams</b> (to Oct 2023) |

Thanks are extended to Louisa Adams and Sophie Dove who stepped down in 2023.

## Steering Committee

Members of the UK DCTN Steering Committee meet three times per year to provide feedback on submitted research proposals and provide advice to studies in development, as well as ongoing trials. The Steering Committee also includes the trustees and patient representatives (listed above) and our UK DCTN Fellows for the duration of their award.

|                     |                        |                         |
|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Rachel Abbott (D)   | Carolyn Charman (D)    | Yusur Al-Niami (D)      |
| Lucy Bradshaw (S)   | Evelyn Davies (D, DC)  | Claudia de Giovanni (D) |
| Abby Macbeth (D)    | Areti Makrygeorgou (D) | Tess McPherson (D)      |
| Gayathri Perera (D) | Tracey Sach (H)        | Debbie Shipley (D)      |
| Mary Sommerlad (D)  | Mel Westmoreland (N)   | Aaron Wernham (D)       |
| Sarah Worboys (G)   | Helen Young (D)        | Shyamal Wahie (D)       |
| Zenas Yiu (D, DC)   |                        |                         |

Key: Dermatologist (D); GP (G); Health Economist (H); Statistician (S); Nurse (N); Deputy Chair (DC)

## CONTACT US

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