



THE AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF DERMATOLOGISTS

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MEDIA RELEASE

DOCTORS TREATING THEIR [www.PATIENTS ONLINE](http://www.patientsonline.com.au)

The days of having to travel to see a dermatologist may soon be a thing of the past for rural Australians. Bush doctors confronted with a puzzling rash can now get specialist advice with just a few clicks of a mouse. A new service, **Tele-Derm**, provides diagnostic and management advice on skin disease. It is hoped that this service will greatly reduce the need for patients to travel long distances to seek specialist dermatological advice.

“Patients in remote areas are often denied specialist input on their skin problems as they either have to travel long distances or wait some months before a dermatologist visits their town,” explained Dr Jim Muir. “Besides the distress caused by their skin condition, there is a great social and economic cost due to the travel, expense and time away from work as a result of their having to go to the city.”

Dr Muir hopes “that the site will reduce professional isolation for rural and remote doctors, as well as helping their patients.” The service is provided free to all Queensland doctors.

“Skin disease is common, distressing and occasionally dangerous. Often the hardest thing is the diagnosis,” says Dr Muir. “All a remote area doctor has to do is send us a digital photo and clinical history of a patient’s skin problem. Using **Tele-Derm**, we can give them an answer within 24 hours. Dermatology is a highly visual specialty and a simple will usually allow accurate diagnosis,” added Dr Muir.

Patient confidentiality is protected as no details or images are transmitted that can identify them. Numerous legal concerns had to be addressed before the service was launched. “Those of us involved in the website felt that innovative projects for Australian patients should continue even in our current uncertain medical indemnity situation,” stated Dr Muir.

The website also offers online continuing medical education for doctors in all aspects of dermatology. There are also chat rooms where doctors can discuss skin problems they have seen.

Tele-derm is a joint project between the Queensland Divisions of General Practice and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine. Dr Muir, a Fellow of the Australasian College of Dermatologists, is the specialist dermatologist for the site.

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To arrange an interview, please contact:

Ros Warnes
Australasian College of Dermatologists
136 Pittwater Road, Gladesville NSW 2111
Phone: 1300 361 821