



## Teledermatology cutting down barriers to specialist skin care

Telemedicine is providing dermatologists with the opportunity to reach remote patients and give emergency consultations after hours, according to world teledermatology expert Professor Anne Burdick, speaking this week at the Australasian College of Dermatologists' 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting on the Gold Coast.

Professor Burdick, Professor of Dermatology at the University of Miami, told delegates that teledermatology has multiple benefits for both patients and doctors.

"Using the internet to carry out dermatology consultations allows us to overcome any access issues the patient may have and to facilitate collaborative care with our colleagues from other specialities," says Professor Burdick.

"While there are some limitations, the technology has advanced to a point where a dermatologist providing a diagnosis for a skin condition via telemedicine can be of great benefit in assisting a local GP to provide high quality dermatological care for their patients.

Australian dermatologist Dr Jim Muir is a consultant at the Skin Emergency Telemedicine Service (SETS) at Princess Alexandra Hospital, Brisbane, which provides an after-hours dermatology service for urgent dermatology patients.

"This service allows us to significantly cut down the time it takes to receive a dermatological diagnosis, and is available 24/7 without the patient needing to go further than their local hospital," says Dr Muir.

"When a patient presents at the hospital, photos are taken and some forms filled in, and sent via email to an on-call dermatologist who is usually able to respond within an hour.

"Patients usually wait longer in casualty for the initial consultation than they do for the report from the dermatologist."

SETS is an example of how the use of secure email and digital images can facilitate specialist dermatological care, delivered rapidly and efficiently to a patient anywhere that has an internet connection.

"This has great potential to be rolled out to emergency departments across Australia, and to assist patients living in rural and remote parts of Australia," says Dr Muir.

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