

Background

- Increased demand for dermatology services in the UK highlights need for new approaches to the provision of care (Schofield et al, 2009)
- Opportunities for dermatology nurses widen with expansion of extended roles
- Membership survey (Penzer-Hick, 2017) suggests that the grade of nurse is not consistent with the roles carried out
- Identified need for defined clinical career pathways and workforce planning to ensure the quality and viability of future dermatological nursing service
- Collaborative workstream involving British Dermatological Nursing Group (BDNG) and British Association of Dermatologists (BAD) was established in 2018 to address these concerns

Aim

To define role descriptors and clear career pathways for dermatology nurses registered in the UK

Methods

- A draft document was proposed outlining role descriptors for different levels of registered dermatology nurses
- Expectations of clinical skills, practice in education, leadership and research were identified
- This draft document was sent with an online survey to members of the BDNG, BAD, Primary Care Dermatology Society and dermatology patient support groups to gauge alignment with existing expectations and practice
- Responses were reviewed by the workstream to inform the development of a revised document which acknowledges stakeholder concerns

Figure 1: Types of clinics dermatology nurse work in

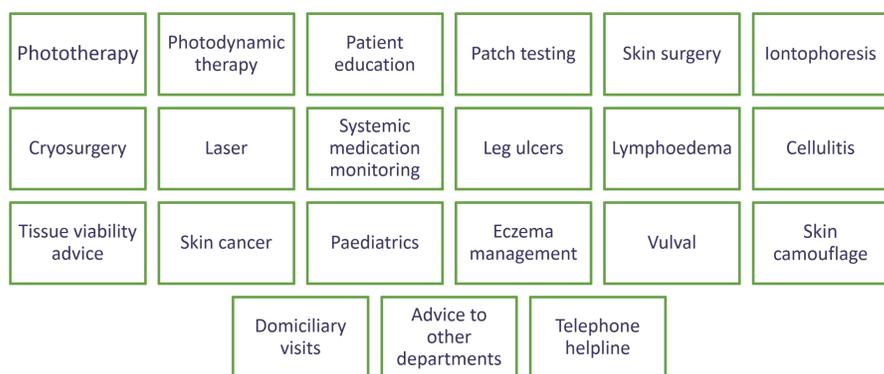
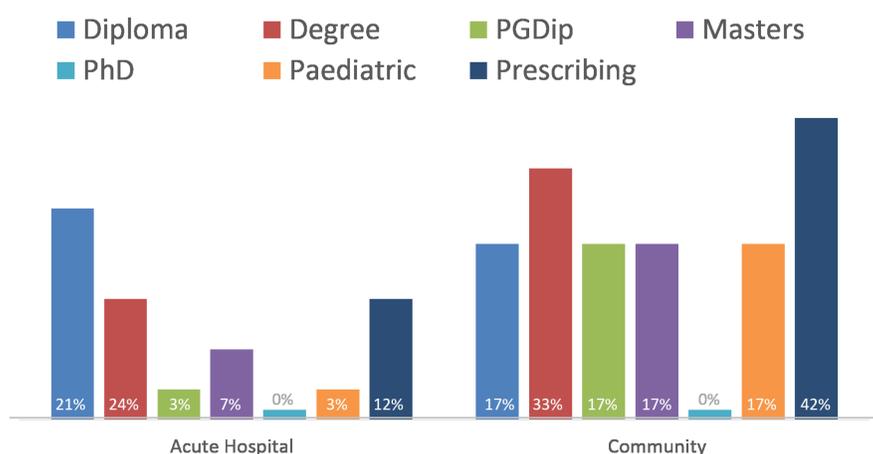


Figure 2: Qualifications held by dermatology nurses



Results

192 survey responses were received: 67% nurses and 33% doctors

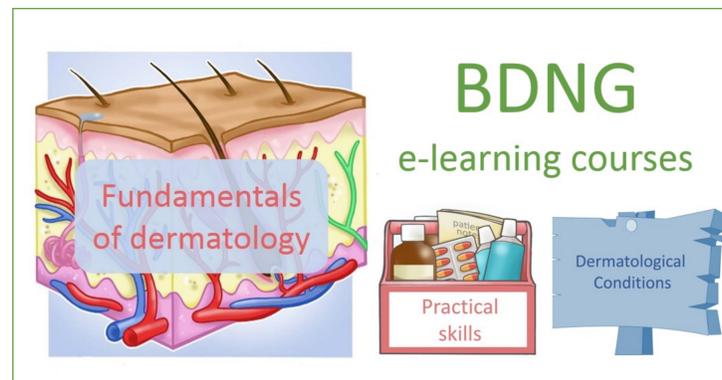
Responses highlighted:

- Some nurses are not being recognised for their role and level of responsibility; inconsistencies identified between grade, scope of practice and leadership responsibility
- Wider non-clinical expectations (leadership, research and education) are currently not well recognised within the continuum of care and career progression
- Constraints of accessing academic education
- Need to include descriptors for nursing assistants

Discussion

The roles of dermatology nurses are varied with many sub-specialist areas for development (Figure 1). Engagement with academic education is increasing amongst dermatology nurses, however attainment of MSc level and above is currently low (Figure 2). Primary reasons for this include limited access to funding for education and time constraints imposed by employers.

The BDNG seeks to support its members with fulfilling their career potential and promotes engagement with and access to an increasing variety of relevant educational opportunities such as e-learning. The ultimate objective of this collaborative workstream is the promotion of patient care and this remains the driver for changes which may be implemented by future guidance.

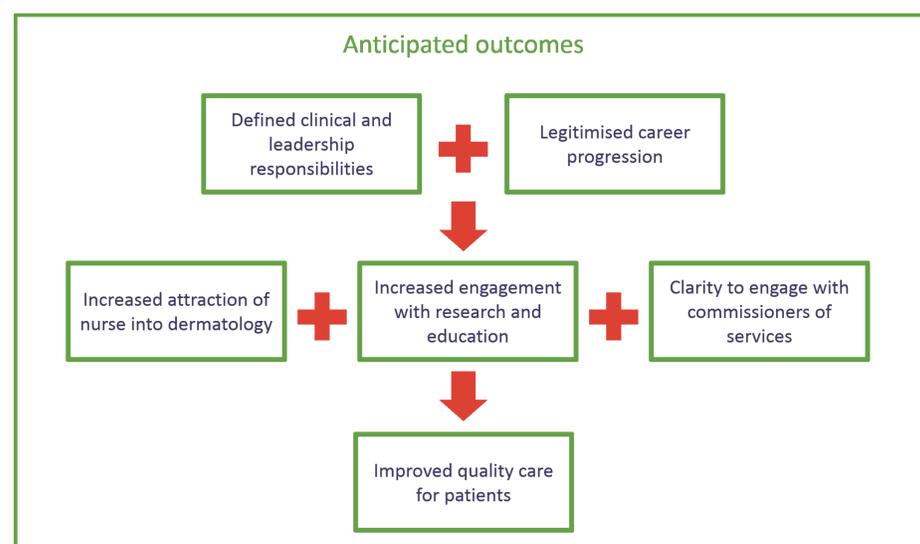


Conclusion

This exercise has sought to scope out the role and clinical career trajectory of dermatology nurses working in the UK and to inform workforce development. The workstream continue towards achieving their objectives and work towards publishing guidance on role descriptions and career progression later this year. Following collaboration with stakeholders, it is anticipated that these will be acknowledged and embraced by both nurses and commissioners of dermatology services.

Through the development of a national benchmark which clearly identifies the attributes and skills of dermatology nurses, the workstream hopes to increase equity and transparency within the profession. Ultimately it is hope that new nurses will be attracted into the speciality by well defined pathways for career progression. These outcomes will serve to ensue future services are sustainable and the quality of patient care remains high.

Once this work is complete we hope that the learning outcomes will be relevant to specialist colleagues working in other countries.



References

- Penzer-Hick, R. (2018) A survey of dermatology services in the UK, *Dermatological Nursing*, 17(2) 28 – 32.
 Schofield, J., Grindlay, D., Williams, H. (2009) Skin conditions in the UK: a health care needs assessment, Centre of Evidence Based Dermatology, University of Nottingham Metro Commercial Printing Ltd, Hertfordshire UK.

