

Project scope: capture-store-and-forward photo triage for primary care dermatology referrals

14 September 2022

Research question

What is the clinical effectiveness, safety, and staff and patient experience of capture-store-and-forward photo triage for dermatology referrals from primary care to secondary care dermatology services?

Inclusion criteria

The selection of studies for inclusion in the literature review element of the project will be based on the following criteria:

Population	Patients (adults and children) who are new referrals from primary care/community care to secondary care dermatology
Intervention	Inclusion of photo-documentation with all referrals to facilitate triage Photographs may be taken by patients, GPs, medical photographers
Comparator	Current practice—written descriptive referrals without photo-documentation
Outcomes	<p>Primary outcomes of interest</p> <p>Waiting times for all referred conditions (variously defined)</p> <p>Time to treatment/advice/reassurance for all conditions</p> <p>Number of face-to-face specialist consultations</p> <p>Proportion of referrals managed virtually (without face-to-face appointment)</p> <p>Proportion redirected (from secondary care dermatology) to specific pathways – eg advice only, surgery, phototherapy, treatment in community/primary care, onward referral to other specialties</p> <p>Additional outcomes of interest</p> <p>Quality of life (eg skin-specific QoL)</p>

	Satisfaction, views, preferences of all stakeholders Safety/harms – eg missed cancers as a result of fewer in-person visits for full body clinical examination/emotional impact of medical selfies Equity around access/use of technology/ethnicity skin tones Cost effectiveness
Limits	From 2005 English language Effectiveness and safety – limit study type to systematic reviews of randomised controlled trials (RCTs) or primary RCTs Before and after studies, implementation studies >100 patients? Cost-effectiveness analyses Satisfaction surveys and qualitative studies of patient and staff experience

Exclusion criteria

Studies that examine and compare image quality.

Studies that compare diagnostic accuracy/inter-rater agreement and concordance of remote and in-person assessment.

Planned activities

SHTG have agreed on the following activities to support the development of an SHTG Assessment on digital dermatology:

1. Evidence review of the published literature on effectiveness, cost effectiveness, safety, patient and staff experience aspects relating to photo-documentation of primary care referrals to dermatology.
2. Health economist support to develop an economic evaluation.
3. Development of a plain language version of the evidence review.
4. Engagement with clinical experts through peer review.

End products

At the end of the project, SHTG will publish:

- SHTG Assessment
- Plain language summary
- Expert comments from peer review

Timescales (approximate)

Approximately three months, starting in mid-September 2022.