

## LETTERS

## UK OFFICE DERMATOLOGISTS

**Teledermatology is the answer**Richard J Motley *dermatologist*

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Rees has raised an important issue.<sup>1</sup> Skin problems constitute a large proportion of general practice consultations, yet few GPs have any worthwhile training in dermatology. No one would contemplate offering GP obstetric care without further qualification, but this is considered acceptable for skin care (perhaps because the risk of causing harm is less). However, on economic grounds alone, this is not a good use of NHS funds.

Some GPs have studied one of the postgraduate diplomas—such as the Cardiff Diploma in Practical Dermatology—so have excellent skills, but not all GPs have the time to do this. In Cardiff we provide a teledermatology service, which focuses on giving timely advice (within 48 hours) to GPs on the diagnosis and management of their patients with skin problems.

This form of consultant supervision and support is very popular with GPs, and 80% of referred patients are managed entirely in primary care. In the modern digital age, this is one way that consultant dermatologists can support GPs, who see most patients with skin problems, and it is a relatively simple method of supporting dermatology services in primary care.

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1 Ross J. The UK needs office dermatologists. *BMJ* 2012;345:e6006. (10 September.)

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