

# Report from New Zealand Dermatology Nurses' Society Annual Nurses' Conference 2024



Firstly, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to ADNA for the learning opportunity from this award.

This was my first time visiting New Zealand and although it was not for a proper holiday, I enjoyed every moment and all the learning I had from our fellow NZ nurses.

The NZDNS annual conference this year was held in Wellington on 29 and 30 August 2024 at The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, New Zealand's national museum. The NZDNS President warned me that it will be very windy that time of the year, and she wasn't wrong! On the first day of the conference, I got swept away by the wind crossing the traffic lights with an umbrella on hand as it was also raining hard! Other than that, this NZ trip was very productive personally and professionally. While the NZ Dermatology Nurses group is not as big as our Australian group (for obvious geographic reasons), it made the conference truly a personal experience and felt very engaging with the spirit of camaraderie among the attendees. I was also impressed by how friendly the Kiwis are and they were very thrilled to have an Aussie representative!

The theme of the conference was 'Skin Through the Ages', and this was reflected on the event program which was presented mostly by nurses sharing their knowledge and experiences in Dermatology nursing throughout their career. There were also pre-recorded presentations from the Dermatologists who were also having their conference at the time in Dunedin.

The first day started with a Dermatologist presentation on vitiligo with current and future treatments. This was followed by a very engaging presentation by Denny Wrottesley who is a nurse specialising in skin cancers where she discussed melanoma pathology reports, how to better interpret this and how to address questions from patients based on the report.

Next was a discussion on new approaches in acne management without peroxide and salicylic acid and involving skin microbiome which was quite interesting. Other topics on the day were surgical post-operative practical approaches to split thickness skin grafts, new treatment and innovations in eczema and contact dermatitis, phototherapy and a suturing workshop. I had to excuse myself from their AGM and that gave me an opportunity to explore the magnificent museum, learn the culture of the Pacific Islanders and take lots of photos to show my young daughter who is obsessed with Moana.

After which, Debbie Rickard, a Child Health Nurse Practitioner, discussed an algorithm for managing patients with paediatric eczema presenting in emergency departments. She discussed a modality she developed as "emollient challenge" which involves frequent application of emollients during their admission then re-evaluating the response prior to deciding whether a patient requires further management such as antibiotics.

The second day kickstarted with a discussion on sunscreen and photoprotection which solidified Dermatology nurses' knowledge on effective sun-protection and Vit D requirements. Acne seemed to be one of the favourite topics as we had 2 nurses present on different acne treatments from past to present. One of the skin cancer nurses also discussed Efidix and the different treatment modalities they use such as combining Efidix and Calcipotriol to reduce the duration of treatment, improve efficacy and speed treatment.

Another very interesting topic and is my personal favourite was the presentation of Juliet Ashbery, a Nurse Practitioner working in Dermatology. She presented on 'A day in the life of a nurse practitioner: case studies' which showed the different patients she sees through the emergency department presenting with dermatologic conditions and request for advice from the wards for a new onset rash or dermatology concern. I found this very relevant to my practice as this is what I see on a daily basis as a Clinical Nurse Consultant in Dermatology working alongside the Dermatology Medical Team.

Throughout the second day, we heard about FTSG practical wound care tips, moisturisers and how to pick the right choice for our patients. We also looked into Juvenile Spring Eruption, the experience of a young boy suffering from the condition and the role of phototherapy in managing the condition based on the concept of tolerance to nbUVB in early spring.

Finally, a Kiwi Dermatology nurse shared her experience working in Outback Australia as a general ward nurse in Broken Hill Hospital and other community centres. It was fantastic to see a specialist Dermatology nurse go back to working in general nursing because of her passion to help others. I admire her courage.

The 2-day conference was really filled with knowledge and the speakers are full of passion in what they do. I am very privileged to have attended and witnessed the expertise of our Kiwi neighbours. One thing I saw is "we are more alike than different" in what we do in Dermatology nursing.

Thank you once again to ADNA for this opportunity.

Charmaine Peras

ADNA NZ Scholarship 2023 Award Winner