The Pacific Dermatology Training Centre (PDTC) is training regional dermatologists for the Pacific

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BACKGROUND

• With only two specialist dermatologists in PNG and one in Fiji, more postgraduate dermatology training was required in the Western Pacific.
• Skin diseases are a major health problem in Fiji and the Pacific and their management can be a challenge.
• From 2016-Dec2018, a Post Graduate Diploma in Dermatology (PGDD) and a Masters in Medicine (Dermatology) (MMED) through Fiji National University were approved.
• The Pacific Dermatology Training centre was established in 2018 at the national skin hospital.

THE PROGRAMME BEGINS

• In 2019, with two Fijians, one Samoan(WHO scholarship) and one Kiribati doctor (Pacific Leprosy Foundation scholarship, NZ) completed the 1year PGDD.
• In 2020, one PNG doctor succeeded but COVID-19 forced the next two Fijian doctors to postpone. In 2021, a Solomon Island doctor joined the two Fijians to undertake the program. A second PNG doctor has been forced to postpone till 2022.
• The MMED will commence in 2022 and will be for graduates from the PGDD to make a four-year course.
• The program has been led by the PDTC director and supported by more than 20 volunteer lecturers.

COURSE WAS ADAPTED DUE TO COVID

• Yearly week long visits by Australian dermatologists to Fiji, along with lectures & local clinic supervision provided by the sole Fijian Dermatologist.
• Adapted to increase clinic sessions
• Followed by online lectures 1-3days/week
• Conducted from Australian Fijian and US dermatologists using videoconferencing using tools such as Zoom.
• Teaching from up to 20 international lecturers throughout 2020

FUTURE PLANS

• The PGDD and MMed are both clinic-based registrar models with regular lectures, and ongoing formal and informal assessment and exams, at the completion of the Diploma and the Masters course.
• Assistance of Fiji based training with lectures and tutorials suing video conferencing from overseas based dermatologists has allowed the program to survive.
• Additional regional dermatology teaching to allow the diploma and master courses to run concurrently in 2022 will be needed.