

Workload guidelines for SAS Dermatologists

- Associate Specialists, Specialty Doctors above threshold two and Staff Grades in possession of optional points should have clinic templates similar to their consultant colleagues.
- As recommended for consultants in the BAD document "Consultant Physicians Working with Patients 5th Edition", appointment times in general clinics should be 20 minutes for a new patient and 15 minutes for a review patient. Shorter appointment times may be appropriate in skin cancer screening clinics.
- In the document "Consultant Physicians Working with Patients 5th Edition", guidelines state that for general clinics, "the ratio of new to follow-up patients and the time allocated will vary depending on the type/complexity of the cases seen. Twelve to 16 patients may be seen in a clinic. In clinics where dermatologists teach undergraduates, train registrars or supervise doctors and nurses, patient numbers should be reduced appropriately."

The numbers suggested refer to a maximum of 12 new patients or 16 review patients or a pro-rata mix in a 4 hour clinic. Numbers will be less for Associate Specialists on the old contract whose sessions are 3.5 hours, not 4 hours. In skin cancer screening clinics, larger numbers can be seen but in "see and treat" clinics where surgery is provided at the first clinic visit, patient numbers must be reduced.

- More junior SASs (Staff Grade dermatologists who are not eligible to apply for optional points and Specialty Doctors below threshold 2) should have smaller clinic lists.
- Independently of patient turn-around time, skin surgery will usually take 20 minutes for a skin biopsy, 30 minutes for a simple excision and 60 – 90 minutes for more complex flaps and graft repairs. Micrographic surgery takes 90 minutes to several hours. These times do not include 'turn around' time between cases which depends on trained nursing support and efficiency.
- Direct patient contact time must be accompanied by appropriate clinical administration time. The most recent guidelines for consultants suggest that 1 clinical PA requires 0.4 PA of administration - i.e. a 4 hour general clinic requires approximately 1.5 hours of clinical administration time.
- The BMA recommends that all SASs, whether working full or part time, are entitled to a minimum of 1 SPA. This may be impractical for those who work very few sessions and it may be appropriate to negotiate with Trusts via the LNC to reach a local agreement. For those who work more hours, 1 SPA is inadequate to permit achievement of the audit and CME requirements for revalidation. The BMA and the Welsh Assembly government have recommended a minimum of 2 SPAs but unless there has been local agreement, this is not a contractual entitlement.

- SASs who take on management or teaching responsibilities or who undertake wider NHS responsibilities should have these recognised in their job plans as additional responsibilities or external duties.