



Waikato DHB / Pinnacle – Practice Guidelines

Guidelines for Taking Good Pictures for Clinical Use – Using a Digital Camera

For use by:
Practice Managers
General Practitioners
Practice Liaison



Version History

Version	Date	Changed By	Revision Description
1.0	22 Jan 2009		Release Version

1. Introduction

The availability of low cost high resolution digital cameras has increased the likelihood that digital patient images will be taken, and used when referring a patient to another service.

Hospital services, particularly dermatology and plastics, are increasingly likely to request digital images to accompany patient referrals to assist with triage.

This document has been created to assist GP practices taking images for clinical use, using a digital camera.

This guideline has been informed by:

- Image management issues identified during pilot of electronic referrals
- Waikato DHB dermatology guidelines for referral
- Waikato DHB image management policies and procedures

This document is intended to provide guidance for General Practice which may be adapted to local conditions, depending upon the availability and use of digital cameras and configuration of practice IT systems.

2. Taking Good Pictures

The instructions below are based on Waikato DHB dermatology referral guidelines:

- Put the patient or at least the area to be photographed away from direct window light, and in front of a plain, mid-colour, matte background e.g., grey wall, green drapes, blue card. Eliminate clutter from the image, such as bookshelves/wall plugs and unnecessary clothing (the patient may wear underwear in most cases).
- Turn all the lights on so the subject is evenly and as well lit as you can achieve.
- Consider using a tripod or monopod if you are unsteady.
- Select “Auto” for focus, aperture, shutter, white balance, flash and ISO control.
- Press the macro button (a flower). {or select the option for close range work}
- In most cases, use the flash.
- If your camera has a 2-second self-timer, you may use it to prevent camera shake when depressing the shutter.
- Have the camera lens at the same level, and perpendicular to the subject.
- Compose the image, hold still and depress the shutter.
- Take a regional ‘anatomic’ picture to show the site and size of the lesion.
- Take one or more close-up pictures.
- Place an identity label with rule, or a ruler, beside the lesion
- Use the zoom to take the picture from further away if the flash lighting is shadowed by the camera body or lens
- Take another close-up image without the flash, if the sensor allows this without blur.
- Dermoscopy images are welcomed, if you have the means to achieve this.

Once you have obtained reliable images using the automatic settings, you may start to adjust the settings. Sometimes it is useful to avoid flash, but this increases image movement artefact and high ISO noise (random specks of colour that may show up in an image, the equivalent of film grain). Ring light/flash is ideal for some close-ups but may flatten out the contours.

Practice!

In general there are two ways for a beginner to get good photos:

- Take lots of photos – at least a few will be usable
- Practice – practice with family or children outside of the clinic without the time pressure of a consultation

3. Samples of Good Images

The following images are provided as examples of good clinical images.

Melanoma Series (3 images)

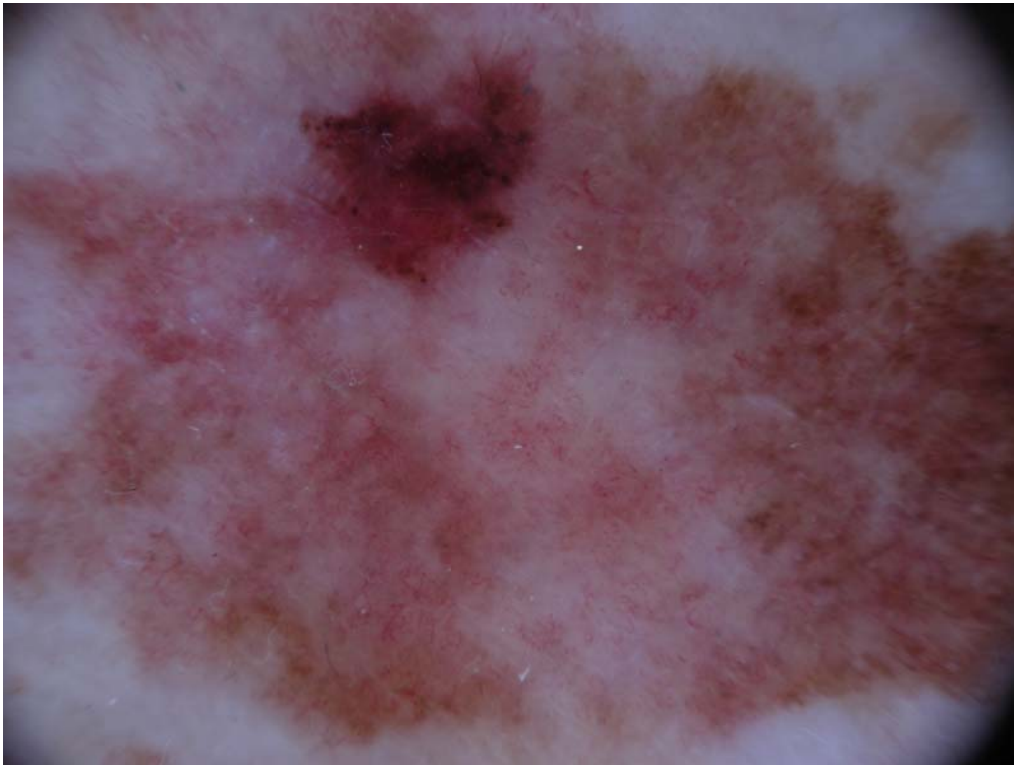
1. Melanoma – Anatomic View (to show location on right thigh)



2. Melanoma – Close-up with Ruler (Note patient ID {blurred}, location, & date)



3. Melanoma – Dermoscopy (if available)



General

1. Hands – with a blue surgical cloth as background; no flash shows skin texture best but need image stabilisation and plenty of light



Annular Erythema Series (2 images)

1. Annular Erythema – Legs to show distribution of rash, with green screen as background



2. Annular Erythema – Close up of typical plaque



