

# BCM J

BC Medical Journal

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## Re: The power of collective impact

The title of the GPSC article in the July/August issue of *BCM J* [2015;57:246] caught my eye, and I thought I would read the article to gain a better understanding. Unfortunately, I came away with very little understanding because the language in the article is heavily loaded with bureaucratic terminology. I was hoping for a clear, simple

explanation but instead came away with the too-common impression of a project filled with nebulous collaboration, embedded evaluations, and other vague notions. The article seems to be trying to create the impression of merit for the process described, while not giving clear details that would let the reader decide if merit is deserved.

—Jim Nugent, MD  
Victoria

## Re: Cancer incidence in BC expected to grow

The most striking statistics in the *BCM J* article “Cancer Incidence in British Columbia Expected to Grow by 57% from 2012 to 2030” [*BCM J* 2015;57:190-196] are the new cases of melanoma—965 reported in 2012 and 2495 expected in 2030, which is an increase of 159%, not the 57% average included in the title. As reported at the World Congress of Dermatology in Vancouver, a person born today has a 1 in 24 lifetime risk of developing melanoma (US figures).

Meanwhile, BC has a critical shortage of dermatologists—the melanoma experts. The only dermatologist in Prince George retired last year with no replacement. The only dermatologist in Vernon died in 2007 and still hasn’t been replaced. The only dermatologist in Kamloops is 75 and de-enrolled from MSP. There are 26 postings for dermatologists on Health Match BC, the provincial recruiting website ([www.healthmatchbc.org](http://www.healthmatchbc.org)). With three dermatologist graduates

from UBC per year, it would take at least 9 years to fill these openings. And by then more dermatologists will have retired since their average age is 56 years—the highest across all specialists (according to the CMA Masterfile, January 2015). BC lost six dermatologists in the past 6 months alone.

The result is long wait lists or, worse yet, no access to a wait list at all. A study from 2012 demonstrated that a lack of dermatologists correlates with a delay in diagnosis of melanoma and an increased risk of death.<sup>1</sup>

In March the Canadian Skin Patient Alliance delivered petitions with over 10 000 signatures appealing to the UBC Faculty of Medicine, Doctors of BC, and the Ministry of Health to correct the deteriorating access to dermatologic care by addressing the training, recruitment, and retention of dermatologists in BC.

The tsunami of melanoma is coming. The severe shortage of dermatologists is already here, and worsening. Where is the planning that the article suggests? God help the patients.

—Evert Tuyp, MD, FRCPC  
President, BC Section of Dermatology

### Reference

1. Aneja S, Aneja S, Bordeaux JS. Association of increased dermatologist density with lower melanoma mortality. *Arch Dermatol* 2012;148:174-178.

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