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## The image capture of patterned cutaneous injuries: Survey results

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An investigator who is involved in assessing the likelihood of physical abuse must make a decision as to whether the injury seen matches the explanation given. In some instances the pattern of these injuries can give the investigator a possible link to the cause of the injury. Photographic imaging is used to record the patterned cutaneous injuries (PCI) and to facilitate forensic interpretation. The current method of capturing PCI often results in some form of distortion that causes a change to the shape of the patterned injury. The Dermatological Patterned Injury Capture and Analysis (DePICA) research group was formed to assess current image capture methods and practices. An online survey was set up to assess the value of localised imaging protocols and training specific to imaging PCI and was made available to law enforcement professionals, forensic investigators and hospital staff. 80 participants responded to the survey. The majority of the survey participants have had training in medical or forensic photography, however 66 (83%) have not had specific training in how to photograph PCI. 41 (51%) of the participants responded that they always use a rigid scale and 34 (43%) position the camera so that it is perpendicular to the scale and injury. Comments made about the quality of images obtained and produced raises concerns about how much knowledge those initiating such images have about image relevance in criminal cases. It is evident that a clear and comprehensive guide to photographing PCIs is required to improve the quality of the photographic evidence that is collected.

### Biography

Sam Evans is Chief Photographer at Cardiff's University Dental Hospital. He has over 13 years experience as a clinical and forensic photographer in the UK. In 2010 he successfully completed a Master of Philosophy degree at the University of Glamorgan. He has presented his work in a range of national and international conferences including the prestigious Royal Society in London. He is the author of a textbook and several academic papers. He is currently a PhD candidate at Cardiff University's Medical School.

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