

ALOPECIA AREATA: DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

INTRODUCING HEALTHCERT EDUCATION

HealthCert Education is a global professional education provider dedicated to saving lives and improving patient outcomes through accredited primary care education for medical professionals. HealthCert Education does not accept sponsorship or commercial interest investment when delivering course content.

PREREQUISITES (MANDATORY)

There are no prerequisites.

COURSE CONTENT

This course provides an in-depth exploration of alopecia areata (AA), a common autoimmune form of non-scarring hair loss with significant clinical and psychosocial impact. Participants will examine the underlying pathophysiology, including immune privilege disruption, genetic susceptibility, and inflammatory cytokine pathways. The course reviews epidemiology, comorbid associations, and prognostic factors, with attention to the varied clinical subtypes from patchy AA to alopecia universalis. Diagnostic approaches will be covered in detail, including trichoscopy, clinical examination, and the use of validated scoring systems such as SALT and ALODEX. Learners will assess key differential diagnoses, such as tinea capitis, trichotillomania, and early scarring alopecias, to enhance diagnostic accuracy. Evidence-based management strategies are discussed, from topical and intralesional corticosteroids to systemic therapies, JAK inhibitors, and adjunctive supportive measures. By the end, participants will be able to diagnose AA confidently, assess severity, and tailor treatment plans to optimise outcomes.

This course is evidence-based, demonstrates best practice and is regularly updated.

RELEVANCE TO GENERAL PRACTICE:

Recent Australian research shows that alopecia areata (AA) is regularly encountered in primary care: the incidence of new-onset AA is about 0.278 per 1,000 person-years, with a prevalence of 0.13% as of late 2020. Many patients first present to their GP with patchy disease and receive treatments such as topical glucocorticosteroids, with referrals to dermatology occurring in a significant minority of cases.¹

Because AA is an autoimmune condition with strong psychosocial and quality-of-life impacts, particularly in young patients,² GPs are in a critical position to provide early recognition, holistic care, and continuity of management. This makes knowledge of AA very important for general practitioners, ensuring they can accurately diagnose, initiate evidence-based therapy, support patients emotionally, and coordinate specialist input when needed.

1. Dermatology Republic, New Alopecia Areata Snapshot Offers National Insights, 2023, <https://www.dermatologyrepublic.com.au/new-alopecia-areata-snapshot-offers-national-insights/2058>
2. Dermatology Times, HRQoL of Patients with Alopecia Areata in Australia, 2024, <https://www.dermatologytimes.com/view/hrqol-of-patients-with-alopecia-areata-in-australia>

LEARNING OUTCOME:

1. Diagnose Alopecia Areata and apply scoring systems.
2. Manage Alopecia Areata using evidenced based guidelines.

PRESENTER:

This course is presented by A/Prof Aaron Robinson.

RECORDING:

Listen and learn about alopecia areata: diagnosis and treatment. The recording can be paused at any point to reflect on content and has a sophisticated search option for locating specific topics. You can copy and paste key slides into your personal document for ongoing reference.

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RECOMMENDED READING:

There are recommended open access readings and articles to enhance learning.

CASE DISCUSSIONS:

There are interactive case discussions to reinforce learning, where participants are encouraged to research, view other responses and discuss topics with other participants. Expert answers are provided once case discussions are submitted.

ASSESSMENT:

There are two online multiple choice examinations for assessment:

- Knowledge-based questions.
- Scenario-based questions with a focus on cases of patient care in the clinical environment.

Assessment is not timed and can be repeated if the 80% pass mark is not achieved with the first attempt.

ACCREDITATION:

HealthCert courses align with the continuing professional development accreditation requirements.

EVALUATION:

An evaluation at the end of the course enables HealthCert Education to continually improve education content.

FUTURE PATHWAY OPTIONS:

Further topics relating to mental health can be viewed on www.healthcert.com. An online chat option on the web page provides you direct access to an Educational Advisor or, if you prefer email, info@healthcert.com. If you would like to speak to an educational advisor, please call 1300 856 695 (Australia) or +44 203 514 0688 (international).

CONTACT HEALTHCERT

Please contact admin@healthcert.com with any questions.

VERSION CONTROL TABLE

All changes must be approved by the Head of Academic Standards or Head of Accreditation.

Version no.	Version date	Authorised officer	Amendment details
1.			
2.			