**Project Title:**
Patients’ perspectives on living with systematic sclerosis (scleroderma)  

**Code:** SPH1

**Host School/ Institute**
Sydney School of Public Health

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**Project Type:** Literature Review, Qualitative Analysis, Clinical

**Project Category:** Chronic Diseases/Illness, Immunology & Infection, Public Health

**Project Keywords:**
1. chronic disease  
2. scleroderma  
3. systematic review  
4. patient perspectives

**Project Description:**
Scleroderma is an incurable autoimmune connective tissue disorder with a variable disease course. For patients with scleroderma, the mortality risk is four times higher within 10 years of diagnosis compared with the aged-matched individuals in the general population. Patients face a lifetime of treatment to manage symptoms which can include pulmonary arterial hypertension, lung and kidney manifestations, and circulation problems. Depression, fatigue, limited functioning, and body image distress contribute to poor quality of life reported in this population.

Qualitative research can offer rich narrative data to provide an in-depth insight about patients’ perspectives on living with scleroderma. The synthesis of multiple qualitative studies can provide a range and depth of meanings, experiences, and perspectives of patients across populations and health-care contexts. The findings can inform clinical practice and the development of interventions to improve patient-centred outcomes.

This study will involve a comprehensive search to identify all relevant qualitative studies on the experiences and perspectives of patients living with scleroderma, critical appraisal of eligible studies, coding qualitative data with the use of computer software and interpretation of data. The student will contribute as a co-author on the manuscript for submission to an international peer-reviewed journal, and present the study findings. This project offers the student an opportunity to gain valuable practical and transferable research skills in the areas of literature searching, critical appraisal of qualitative research, coding qualitative data using computer software, synthesis of qualitative research, research presentation, manuscript writing, and reference management.