

## US medical professionals praise north Queensland study encouraging GPs to use non-sterilised gloves

ABC Tropical North By Sophie Kesteven

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**Overseas medical professionals have praised a study from regional Queensland, listing it in the top 20 research studies of 2015.**

The study, carried out by James Cook University Mackay professor of general practice Clare Heal, tested the effectiveness of sterile gloves versus clean, non-sterile gloves.

Since entering a career in the medical field 25 years ago, Dr Heal has worn thousands of gloves for various procedures.

When the opportunity arose to carry out a study on the effectiveness of different types of gloves, she embraced the idea.

Hoping to find out what type of gloves were most effective for minor procedures, Dr Heal undertook a trial at Paul Hopkins Medical Centre in Mackay.

"Some of the doctors at the practice used sterile gloves and some of them used non-sterile gloves, and they basically couldn't decide which one was the best type of gloves to use," she said.

"We randomised patients and compared using the non-sterile clean gloves with the sterile clean gloves for minor skin excisions."

Dr Heal discovered the infection rate was actually higher with the more expensive sterile gloves than the cheaper clean, boxed gloves.

According to Dr Heal's results, the boxed gloves had an infection rate of 8.7 percent, whereas sterile gloves had an infection rate of 9.3 percent.

The findings were significant because non-sterilised gloves cost about 10 cents per pair, whereas the sterile gloves cost about a \$1.10 per pair.

"It's significant for normal GPs but I also think that some of it translates into the third world countries where medical costs are really quite significant," Dr Heal said.

"But I think the message is that world class research can be done in rural areas such as Mackay quite successfully."

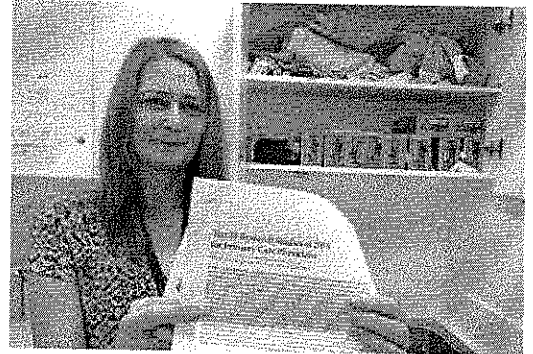
The study was named in the top 20 research studies of 2015 by the American College of Primary Care Physicians.

Dr Heal said it was a huge honour because it included studies not just from the US and Canada, but from all around the world.

"The process that they use to choose the top 20 studies is very rigorous," she said.

"They search 110 journals and come up with over 2,000 articles.

"Then they choose the top 200 and send them around to lots of GPs in America and Canada.



**PHOTO:** Dr Clare Heal says world-class research can be done in regional areas.  
(ABC Tropical North: Sophie Kesteven )

**MAP:** Mackay 4740



**PHOTO:** The study results will help medical professionals save on costs.  
(ABC Tropical North: Sophie Kesteven )

"They rate each of these articles and come up with the top 20 that are high quality and relevant to their clinical practice."

Dr Heal said she thought the study made it onto the list because the results were significant for everyday GPs.

"I think GPs worldwide found the results of this study very practical for their practice," she said.

Dr Heal added that the co-authors of the study also included Dr Shampavi Sri Haran, Dr Petra Buttner, and Debbie Kimber who is a practice nurse at Paul Hopkins Medical Centre.

**Topics:** medical-research, mackay-4740

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