INTRODUCTION

This issue of Seminars in Cutaneous Medicine and Surgery, the first of its kind, is dedicated to providing the most up-to-date information about dermatologic conditions that affect people of color. Each article is written by authors who are leading authorities on pigmented skin, many of whom are also pioneers in the research and education of their respected topics.

June 1, 2009

During the past several years, dermatologic issues pertaining to people of color have become more pervasive in the literature and in the media. Research has shown that differences in skin properties and pathophysiology do exist among people of different ethnicities. It is likely that these differences attribute to an increased prevalence of certain skin conditions in darker skinned people, as well as differences in disease presentation and response to treatment. Because there is a general lack of awareness of exactly what these differences are, clinicians are often less confident in the diagnosis and management of skin conditions seen in their darker skinned patients. This issue of Seminars in Cutaneous Medicine and Surgery, the first of its kind, is dedicated to providing the most up-to-date information about dermatologic conditions that affect people of color. Each article is written by authors who are leading authorities on pigmented skin, many of whom are also pioneers in the research and education of their respected topics.

This special issue is divided into the most clinically relevant topics pertaining to skin of color, including management of common skin disorders, pigmenery disorders, skin cancer, diseases affecting hair, and cosmetic considerations. The issue begins with a comprehensive update on managing common disorders in darker skin types led by Dr Andrew Alexis, Director of the Skin of Color Center at St. Luke’s-Roosevelt Hospital Center. Dr A. Paul Kelly, pioneer in skin of color education and research and Chairman of Dermatology at King-Drew Medical Center, provides an update on the pathogenesis of another common condition, keloids, and a practical approach to their management.

Disorders of pigmentation can be devastating for patients both socially and psychologically, and unfortunately preferentially affect people with darker skin. Dr Pearl Grimes, leader of dyschromia research, Clinical Professor of Dermatology at the University of California Los Angeles and Director of the Vitiligo and Pigmentation Institute of Southern California, provides a comprehensive review of the pathogenesis and most ground-breaking treatments for post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation and melasma. Dr Rebat Halder, dyschromia expert and Professor and Chairman of the department of dermatology at Howard University College of Medicine, reviews the latest advances in the etiology and pathogenesis of vitiligo and provides an
evidence-based approach to the management of the vitiligo patient.

Although skin cancer is a well-described subject within the field of dermatology, the etiopathogenesis in people of color is not as clear. The next two articles focus on skin cancer in people of color, as Dr Brooke Jackson, Mohs surgeon and Director of the Skin Wellness Center of Chicago, reviews nonmelanoma skin cancer, and Dr Mohammed Kashani-Sabet, Director of the Melanoma Center at the University of California San Francisco, leads a discussion of recent melanoma trends among African-, Asian-, Latin-, and Native-American people.

Other than pigmentary disorders, diseases affecting hair are one of the most common complaints among those with skin of color and especially African-American patients. Hair care practices among African-American women are often poorly understood by non-African-American clinicians, yet important for dermatologists to understand given the propensity for some of these practices to lead to hair disorders. Dr Amy McMichael, Professor of Dermatology at Wake Forest University School of Medicine and editor of Hair and Scalp Diseases: Medical, Surgical, and Cosmetic Treatments, provides an in-depth review of common hair care practices in African-American patients and their consequences. Professor of Dermatology at the University of California San Francisco and hair authority, Dr Vera Price, addresses the diagnostic challenges that clinicians face when presented with hair loss and provides a practical approach to diagnosing and managing hair loss in women of color.

Finally, with ethnic patients now accounting for approximately 24% of cosmetic patients, an 11% increase since 2007, cosmetic considerations in skin of color are addressed. Dr Lily Talakoub and I review differences in perception of beauty and cosmetic procedures performed in people of different ethnic backgrounds. Dr Eliot Battle, laser authority in darker skin types and director of Cultura Medical Spa, reviews the indications, benefits, potential risks, and treatment of complications associated with the use of lasers in darker skin.

It has been an honor to work with this gifted and inspirational group of authors in creating this issue. I sincerely hope that the readers of this issue of Seminars in Cutaneous Medicine and Surgery find the information provided helpful and applicable to their daily practice. In addition, I hope that the issue is useful for the brilliant minds that will further research and delineate the differences and unique qualities of skin of color patients.

Naissant O. Wesley, MD
Guest Editor

Organizations with a Special Interest in Disorders of Skin of Color

Skin of Color Society
skinofcolorsociety.org
Upcoming meeting: March 2010, Miami, Fl

Cicatricial Alopecia Research Foundation (CARF)
P.O. Box 64158
Los Angeles, CA 90064
phone: (310) 475-2419
fax: (310) 475-4883
www.carfintl.org
Upcoming San Francisco support group:
July 7 and October 6, 2009 from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at the Kaiser Permanente Medical Center, 2238 Geary Boulevard, San Francisco, California, in the Diamond Conference Room on the 3rd floor.
Please e-mail: sanfranciscosupportgroup@carfintl.org

Upcoming meetings:
CARF’s 5th Anniversary Celebration
6 pm, Saturday, October 17, 2009
at the University of California Faculty-Alumni House
745 Parnassus Avenue, San Francisco
Please email: SFevent@carfintl.org

International Patient/Doctor Conference
Fall 2010
Los Angeles, CA
Please email: info@carfintl.org

National Vitiligo Foundation
P.O. Box 23226
Cincinnati, OH 45223
TEL: 513-541-3903
FAX: 513-558-0198
www.nvfi.org