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Dear friends and colleagues,

It is a pleasure and privilege to share the first Dermatology Annual Report with you. As you leaf through the virtual pages, you will notice that the Michigan Medicine Department of Dermatology is flourishing in each arm of our tripartite mission. Much has been said about the challenging times we are currently facing. In this context, the efforts of our faculty, learners, and staff to accomplish the successes highlighted in this report cannot be emphasized enough.

As summarized on the following page, our mission is to advance dermatologic patient care, research and education, grounded in an unwavering commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. While these principles may have guided our department throughout its rich history, the collective creation and articulation of our mission and vision for the future has been a highly rewarding and humbling experience. Importantly, it ensures that we hold ourselves accountable to our aspirations and the direction of the path we will follow to accomplish them.

Clinically, the past year has been dominated by ongoing efforts to overcome a broad range of impacts related to the pandemic. Through an expansion of new and existing virtual platforms, an abundance of scheduling flexibility by all clinical providers and staff, and a never-before-seen resilience to overcome widespread staffing limitations, we have provided complex and general dermatologic care in nearly 50,000 patient visits with an overall patient satisfaction score of 96.4%; an achievement we must all be incredibly proud of.

Our team of new and existing highly talented basic, translational and clinical scientists demonstrated equally remarkable resilience as illustrated by the sustained high number of publications, federal and non-federal grants, high NIH ranking, and increased number of grant submissions and clinical trials. A particularly noteworthy achievement is the success of the University of Michigan Skin Biology and Diseases Resource-based Center through a seamless conversion to a virtual platform.

The training of future generations of leaders in dermatology, one of our most impactful missions, is thriving at Michigan Medicine. We invite you to read about the variety of didactic activities for all learners in our department, including a concerted focus on improving diversity, equity and inclusion in the entire curriculum. Perhaps the most meaningful testimony of the department’s educational success is the significant increase in the number of medical students interested in pursuing dermatology.

The omission of individuals in this introduction is intentional, as the achievements of our department are truly a collective effort. However, our individual successes would never have been so masterfully highlighted without Stephanie Zaleski’s extraordinary efforts and the contributions of many members of the Department of Dermatology, to whom we are deeply indebted for the creation of this marvelous report.

I hope that you enjoy the 2021 Dermatology Annual Report and look forward to seeing you at both traditional and new alumni events in 2022 – stay tuned! Until that time, may you and your loved ones experience a joyful, relaxed and healthy holiday season.

With gratitude,
Chris Bichakjian
The mission of the Michigan Medicine Department of Dermatology is to advance dermatologic patient care, research, and education, grounded in an unwavering commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Our vision for the Michigan Medicine Department of Dermatology is committed to improving the health of all our patients through compassionate and equitable care. We strive to advance our collective knowledge by pushing the boundaries of medical science through research and innovation. We aspire to train and empower future generations of socially-conscious and passionate leaders in dermatology, ready to tackle the challenges in our field. We are dedicated to fostering a community that values individual differences and respects diverse talents. At the core of our mission, we acknowledge the sociocultural context in which our work occurs and will work ceaselessly towards promoting diversity and cultivating inclusion.
COVID-19 RAMP-UP

In the fall of 2020, we started to safely ramp up patient care and clinical research activity, while adhering to social distancing guidelines for reception areas and implementing changes to room flow to support more thorough disinfection. In order to support the over 3,000 patients whose care was deferred due to COVID-19 restrictions, we temporarily extended Medical Dermatology afternoon clinics, and added additional clinics including on Saturdays. Thanks to the tremendous teamwork of faculty, residents, clinic staff, and call center team members, we were able to reduce the waitlist and end these temporary adjustments in March 2021.

Research labs also ramped back up, gradually increasing the percent of staff occupancy each lab could support based upon guidance from the U-M Office of Research. By April 2021, these occupancy restrictions were removed, while social distancing and masks remained.

This year we also celebrated the arrival of COVID-19 vaccinations. While masks and social distancing remain an everyday part of our department’s daily activities, we have fully embraced the privilege of having vaccination available for all our employees.

Throughout COVID-19 pandemic, our department has truly done a remarkable job during an unprecedented crisis, working together to navigate new and unique challenges on a day-to-day basis. At the end of the day, our teamwork helped us come through stronger than before.
DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP

Christopher Bichakjian, MD
Department Chair

Kristin Bernstein, MHA
Department Administrator

Andrzej Dlugosz, MD
Associate Chair for Research

Frank Wang, MD
Assistant Chair for Medical Education

DIVISION CHIEFS

Milad Eshaq, MD
Medical Dermatology

Kelly Harms, MD, PhD
Cutaneous Surgery and Oncology

Jeffrey Orringer, MD
Cosmetic Dermatology
**Alison Bates Durham, MD**, Clinical Associate Professor of Dermatology, was appointed the **Lewis and Lillian Becker Professor of Dermatology** on October 1, 2020, becoming the first female faculty member in the department to hold an endowed professorship. Established through the generosity of Lewis and Lillian Becker, the Becker Professorship supports a U-M Dermatology faculty member engaged in medical research focused on skin cancer epidemiology, therapy, education, and biology at Michigan Medicine.

Dr. Alison Durham graduated from the University of Michigan Medical School, where she also completed her dermatology residency and a procedural dermatology fellowship. She joined our Mohs surgery faculty as a Clinical Lecturer in 2013, became a Clinical Assistant Professor in 2014, and was promoted to Clinical Associate Professor in September 2020. An outstanding physician, educator and research scholar, Dr. Durham serves as Assistant Program Director of the U-M Dermatology Residency, Program Director of the Micrographic Surgery and Dermatologic Oncology Fellowship and Director of the U-M Cutaneous Oncology Biobank Program. She is a nationally recognized expert on management of melanoma and other high-risk skin cancers in the field of cutaneous oncology, whose research focuses on the optimization of clinical outcomes for patients with complex cutaneous malignancies. Dr. Durham has published over 30 peer-reviewed articles, and has presented her research nationally. Her research has been supported by funding from the NIH, the Dermatology Foundation, and pharmaceutical industry grants.

Initially created as a collegiate professorship, the Taylor Professorship was previously held by Dr. Timothy Johnson from November 1999 through May 2005, and by Dr. Charles Ellis from 2008 until his retirement in 2018.

**Frank Wang, MD**, Clinical Associate Professor of Dermatology, was appointed the **William B. Taylor Endowed Professor of Clinical Dermatology** on September 1, 2020. Established in part by donations from alumni and friends, this professorship honors the late William B. Taylor, MD, an esteemed U-M Dermatology faculty mentor (1950-1992). The Taylor Professorship supports a dermatology faculty member leading work to advance dermatological training at Michigan Medicine.

Dr. Frank Wang graduated from Cornell University Medical College in 2004. He completed dermatology residency training and a translational dermatology research fellowship (NIH T32 Training Grant in Cell and Molecular Dermatology) at the U-M Department of Dermatology and was recruited to the department’s faculty as a Clinical Lecturer in 2010. He became a Clinical Assistant Professor in 2012, and was promoted to Clinical Associate Professor in 2017.

Dr. Wang is a dedicated physician, educator and research scholar, who serves as the Department of Dermatology’s Assistant Chair of Medical Education, Director of Faculty Education, and Assistant Program Director for the Dermatology Residency, as well as the Medical Director of the Dermatology Treatment Center. Dr. Wang leads translational research examining the skin’s extracellular matrix in healthy, aging and diseased skin. He has published over 25 peer-reviewed articles, and has presented his research nationally. His research has been supported by funding from the NIH, the Dermatology Foundation, and pharmaceutical industry grants.

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Promotions and New Appointments

Seven faculty members from the Department of Dermatology were promoted in fiscal year 2021:

- Alison Durham, MD, and Trilokraj Tejesvi, MBBS, MD were each promoted to Clinical Associate Professor
- Mrinal Sarkar, PhD was promoted to Assistant Research Scientist
- Jennifer Mancuso, MD; Allison Darland, MD; and Sruthi Renati, MD were each appointed Clinical Assistant Professor

Five individuals were appointed as faculty in the Department of Dermatology in fiscal year 2021:

- Li-Jyun Syu, PhD was appointed Assistant Research Scientist
- Megan Shelton, MD was appointed Clinical Lecturer
- J. Michelle Kahlenberg, MD, PhD, Associate Professor of Internal Medicine (Rheumatology); Christina Angeles, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery (Surgical Oncology); and John Varga, MD, Professor of Internal Medicine (Rheumatology) were each jointly appointed as faculty members in the Department of Dermatology

Seven faculty members from the Department of Dermatology have been promoted in fiscal year 2022:

- Kelly Cha, MD, PhD, and Kelly Harms, MD, PhD were each promoted to Clinical Associate Professor
- Johann Gudjonsson, MD, PhD was promoted to Professor, with tenure
- Taihao Quan, MD, PhD was promoted to Research Professor
- Allison Billi, MD, PhD was appointed Assistant Professor and Leela Hamp, MD was appointed Clinical Assistant Professor
- May Chan, MD was promoted to Clinical Professor (Pathology)

Three individuals were appointed as faculty in the Department of Dermatology in fiscal year 2022:

- Olesya Plazyo, PhD was appointed Research Investigator
- Mio Nakamura, MD was appointed Clinical Assistant Professor
- Erica Stevens, MD was appointed Adjunct Physician Instructor

New Roles

- Alison Durham, MD was appointed Director of Micrographic Surgery and Dermatologic Oncology Fellowship
- Kelly Cha, MD, PhD was appointed Medical Director of the Domino’s Farms Medical Dermatology Ambulatory Care Unit

Faculty Distinction

- Yolanda Helfrich, MD was elected to the Steering Committee for the Residency Program Directors Section of the Association of Professors of Dermatology
- Trilokraj Tejasvi, MBBS, MD was appointed as Chair of the Teledermatology Task Force for the American Academy of Dermatology
- Mari Paz Castanedo Tardan, MD received a 2021 Presidential Citation Award from the American Contact Dermatitis Society
- Matthew Patrick, MEng, PhD received a 2021 Research Career Development Award provided through the Dermatology Foundation
- Allison Billi, MD, PhD received a 2021 Basic/Translational Research Young Investigator Award from the American Academy of Dermatology
- Johann Gudjonsson, MD, PhD received a 2021 Research Achievement Award in Psoriasis from the American Skin Association
- Christopher Bichakjian, MD was elected President of the Michigan Dermatological Society

Departures

- Josephine Quintanilla-Dieck, MD resigned from her position as Clinical Assistant Professor on June 30, 2021
- Megan Shelton, MD resigned from her position as a Clinical Lecturer on August 30, 2021
- Noah Smith, MD, resigned from his position as Clinical Assistant Professor on December 3, 2021
RETIEMENTS

Timothy M. Johnson, MD retired from the University of Michigan on October 1, 2020. In recognition of his exceptional contributions as scholar, clinician, leader, and mentor, he was appointed as Emeritus Professor of Dermatology, Otolaryngology and Surgery.

During his career at Michigan, Dr. Johnson served as Director of the Mohs Micrographic Surgery Fellowship, Director of the Multidisciplinary Melanoma Program and Division Chief of Cutaneous Surgery and Oncology (CSO). He founded the cutaneous oncology biobank program, fostering pioneering research and improved treatment outcomes for patients with skin cancer. His clinical scholarship includes more than 300 publications and book chapters, and numerous keynote and named lectureships throughout the U.S. and abroad.

Under his leadership, the Michigan Medicine CSO Division grew into one of the top interdisciplinary clinical programs in the nation. In recognition of his exceptional patient care, Dr. Johnson received the University of Michigan Medical School (UMMS) Dean’s Clinical Award for the Specialist in 2002. In addition he was awarded the Kung-Sun Oh Memorial Lectureship (2008), the American Academy of Dermatology Everett C. Fox, MD, Memorial Lectureship (2011) and a Presidential Citation from the American Head and Neck Society (2012).

Dr. Johnson has served leadership roles for several national and international organizations that impact dermatology, melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancer, including invited membership on the National Comprehensive Cancer Network Guidelines Committees for Skin Cancer (1996-2006) and the American Joint Committee on Cancer Staging (2006-2017). Beyond his service to the dermatology specialty, Dr. Johnson served as UMMS Senior Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs and the Executive Director of the University of Michigan Medical Group from 2017 through 2018. In this role he oversaw Michigan Medicine’s ambulatory care and clinical operations, including establishment of the U-M Brighton Center for Specialty Care.

Dr. Johnson joined the University of Michigan as an Assistant Professor in 1990, was promoted to Associate Professor in 1996 and Professor in 2003. He was the inaugural recipient of both the William B. Taylor Collegiate Professorship in Dermatology (1999-2005), and the Lewis and Lillian Becker Professorship in Dermatology (2005-2020). In his retirement, Dr. Johnson has continued to participate in scholarship and mentoring at Michigan Medicine.

Tianyuan He, MD, PhD, Assistant Research Scientist in Dermatology retired from the University of Michigan on July 1, 2021, following 23 years with the Department of Dermatology.

Dr. He started as a postdoctoral fellow in the Photobiology and Aging Skin Research Program in the lab of Dr. Gary Fisher in 1998. He joined the research faculty as a Research Investigator in 2008, and was promoted to Assistant Research Scientist in 2013.

Dr. He’s research has largely focused on investigating the molecular and cellular mechanisms which drive the aging process in human skin, seeking to understand the underlying cause of skin fragility and attendant impaired wound healing in the aged. During the course of his research, Dr. He has dissected the major pathways regulating the production and degradation of type I collagen, the most abundant protein in human skin, including work that has identified the TGF-beta/CTGF pathway as the primary mechanism regulating collagen homeostasis in human skin and human skin fibroblasts.

Dr. He’s research and scholarly contributions include authorship of multiple peer-reviewed original articles in top scientific journals, including the Journal of Investigative Dermatology, Aging, PLoS, and Journal of Dermatological Science. He has presented numerous lectures at research conferences, including meetings of the Society of Investigative Dermatology. In addition, Dr. He provided research mentorship and training to numerous students, medical students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty members at the University of Michigan and throughout the country, sharing his professional insight, empathy, and kindness.
Primary Dermatology Faculty

*Denotes faculty member who retired or departed
**Denotes faculty members who were appointed in fiscal year 2022
Primary Dermatology Faculty

Mio Nakamura, MD**
Clinical Assistant Professor

Jeffrey Orringer, MD
Clinical Professor

Amy Orsini, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor

Matthew Patrick, MEng, PhD
Research Investigator

Olesya Plazyo, PhD**
Research Investigator

Taihao Quan, MD, PhD
Research Professor

Josephine Quintanilla-Dieck, MD*
Clinical Assistant Professor

Sruthi Renati, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor

Dana Sachs, MD
Clinical Professor

Mrinal Sarkar, PhD
Assistant Research Scientist

Jennifer Schwartz, MD
Clinical Associate Professor

Megan Shelton, MD*
Clinical Lecturer

Noah Smith, MD*
Clinical Assistant Professor

Erica Stevens, MD**
Adjunct Physician Instructor

Li-Jyun Syu, PhD
Assistant Research Scientist

Trilokraj Tejasvi, MBBS, MD
Clinical Associate Professor

Lam C. (Alex) Tsoi, PhD
Assistant Professor

Monique Verhaegen, PhD
Research Assistant Professor

John Voorhees, MD
Professor

Frank Wang, MD
Clinical Associate Professor

Sunny Wong, PhD
Associate Professor

*Denotes faculty member who retired or departed
**Denotes faculty members who were appointed in fiscal year 2022
Associated Dermatology Faculty

Aleodor Andea, MD
Clinical Professor
Pathology

Christina Angeles, MD
Assistant Professor
Surgery (Surgical Oncology)

Scott Bresler, MD, PhD
Clinical Assistant Professor
Pathology

May Chan, MD
Clinical Professor
Pathology

Pierre Coulombe, PhD
Professor
Cell & Developmental Biology

Douglas Fullen, MD
Clinical Professor
Pathology

Kelly Armstrong, PA-C
Physician Assistant

Rajiv Patel, MD
Clinical Professor
Pathology

Christina Angeles, MD
Assistant Professor
Surgery (Surgical Oncology)

Kiley Bastien, PA-C
Physician Assistant

Paul Harms, MD, PhD
Clinical Associate Professor
Pathology

Alexandra Hristov, MD
Clinical Associate Professor
Pathology

J. Michelle Kahlenberg, MD, PhD
Associate Professor
Internal Med. (Rheumatology)

Christopher Lao, MD
Clinical Professor
Internal Med. (Medical Oncology)

Lori Lowe, MD
Clinical Professor
Pathology

Rajiv Patel, MD
Clinical Professor
Pathology

John Varga, MD
Professor
Internal Med. (Rheumatology)

Scott Bresler, MD, PhD
Clinical Assistant Professor
Pathology

May Chan, MD
Clinical Professor
Pathology

Pierre Coulombe, PhD
Professor
Cell & Developmental Biology

Douglas Fullen, MD
Clinical Professor
Pathology

Kelly Armstrong, PA-C
Physician Assistant

Zehra Rahman, PA-C
Physician Assistant

Kayla Taylor, PA-C
Physician Assistant
PATIENT CARE | BY THE NUMBERS

Total Patient Visits: 48,829
New Patient Visits: 16,349
Overall Patient Satisfaction Score: 96.4%

DIVISIONS
- Cosmetic Dermatology
- Cutaneous Surgery and Oncology
- Medical Dermatology

LOCATIONS
- Brighton Center for Specialty Care
- Dexter Health Center
- Domino’s Farms
- Mott Children’s Hospital
- Rogel Cancer Center
- Taubman Center
- Veteran’s Affairs Ann Arbor
- HealthCare System
VIRTUAL CARE

Our department offered "asynchronous" virtual care in the form of E-visits and E-consults for several years, but had not yet implemented real-time video visits at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to the need for additional virtual care options, our clinical teams were able to rapidly implement video visits and expand our existing virtual care services to safely and effectively accommodate the dermatological needs of our patients.

The volume of dermatology video visits quickly ramped up to a steady state by late summer 2020. During this time, our clinical teams worked to overcome various technical and logistical challenges, such as video connectivity issues. They also worked to improve our processes to enhance both the provider and patient experience, including requesting patients to upload photos of their condition on the MiChart patient portal in advance of their video visit, for review by their provider. This small change has proven remarkably helpful. In addition, we continue to evaluate and revise the conditions and diagnoses that must be seen in person rather than via a video visit. Certain dermatology concerns, such as skin lesion assessment and total body skin cancer exams remain best suited for in-person appointments.

E-visit volume has also increased dramatically since the beginning of the pandemic with a large spike around April 2021. We offer E-visits for several diagnoses, including acne, rosacea, eczema, psoriasis, isotretinoin, hemangioma, skin lesions and rashes. We continue to revise our E-visit questionnaires to improve the process for both patients and providers. E-visits allow the patient to complete the visit on their own time, rather than having a scheduled appointment time for an in-person or video visit. E-visits can also serve well as a triage mechanism, allowing the provider an opportunity to re-route patients to either a video visit or an in-person visit within a specified time frame. Many patients, particularly those who live out of town or those who are immunocompromised, have expressed appreciation of the option to receive virtual care, which saves them significant time and reduces the risk of exposure to COVID-19, compared to an in-person visit.

Virtual care in dermatology is here to stay. While it may not work well for all dermatology diagnoses, it is a convenient option for many patients, improves patient satisfaction and supports our ability to provide effective and responsive care. We recently launched a research project in our department, to help us identify which diagnoses have been managed most effectively with virtual care.

Virtual Care Definitions

| E-Visit: a patient fills out a questionnaire and receives a written treatment plan |
| E-Consult: a primary care provider and another provider, typically a specialist, consult regarding a specific patient/condition |
| Video Visit: two-way audiovisual communication between and patient and a Michigan Medicine provider |

BY THE NUMBERS

- 2,977 Video Visits
- 2,151 E-Visits
- 1,171 E-Consults

Sruthi Renati, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor
Dermatology Virtual Care Champion
DERMATOLOGY AT THE VA

Dr. Trilokraj Tejasvi leads our VA Dermatology clinical team, providing specialty care to U.S. veterans throughout Michigan and in neighboring states. Our VA Dermatology physicians offer in-person clinic visits, as well as telemedicine options including “asynchronous” E-visits (dermatologist to patient) and E-consults (dermatologist to provider), and “synchronous” real-time video visits (dermatologist to patient).

The VA's robust telemedicine platform delivers dermatology expertise to veterans living in remote and rural areas via the VA's network of Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs). Medical staff at these local facilities assist dermatological care through services such as biopsies and blood draws, as well as digital photography and internet access. These services provide essential support for the many veterans, who do not own a smartphone or have other means to supply their information and photos to their VA dermatologist.

Like most patient care programs, the VA Dermatology Service was initially challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic during 2020-2021. Although telemedicine services were expanded to offset restrictions on in-person clinical visits, veterans living in Michigan were unable to make appointments at their local CBOC, which limited their access to dermatology E-consults. Dr. Tejasvi noted that by highlighting this concern within the VA telemedicine system, the pandemic has identified opportunities for innovation and improvement in providing care to our nation’s veterans. Despite these early hurdles, the VA Dermatology Service was able to meet the care needs of our veterans. Veterans with skin cancer and melanoma were able to be seen within one week, and clinical visits for those with urgent dermatological concerns were prioritized to ensure there was no compromise in the care provided to our veterans.

Over the past year, the VA Dermatology Service also saw changes in physician staffing, including Dr. J.T. Elder’s exit from VA patient care to focus on research. The appointment of dermatologist Dr. Tyler Menge, who recently completed a Michigan Medicine dermatopathology fellowship, has supported VA patient care and introduced new training opportunities for our residents in the use of reflectance confocal microscopy for skin cancer diagnosis and surgical planning. In addition, Dr. Mari Paz Castanedo Tardan was appointed as the U-M Dermatology Residency Program’s VA Site Director, overseeing dermatology resident training and service at the VA.

BY THE NUMBERS

11,225 Total Patient Visits

3,549 Face to Face Visits

7,676 Virtual Visits

Pictured left: Dr. Sara Fossum (House Officer) and Dr. Trilokraj Tejasvi practice using the VA’s reflectance confocal microscopy (RCM) microscope.

Trilokraj Tejasvi, MBBS, MD
Clinical Associate Professor
Service Chief of Dermatology at the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System
FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: Dr. Jennifer Mancuso

Jennifer Mancuso, MD was recruited to our faculty in 2018 as a Clinical Lecturer to provide medical dermatology patient care with clinics at Domino’s Farms and Mott Children’s Hospital and staff the dermatology consultation service, providing dermatological expertise to patients within the Michigan Medicine Hospitals and Emergency Department.

Since joining our department, Dr. Mancuso has remained very active as a clinical educator, participating in dermatology teaching for the M1 Skin Sequence, M2 Transitions to Clerkship, and M3/M4 Clerkship Rotations, as well as providing bedside instruction to dermatology house officers and to medical students within her clinics. In 2019, Dr. Mancuso helped to establish regular Morbidity and Mortality conferences within U-M Department of Dermatology CME conference schedule, enhancing learning opportunities for residents, faculty and other providers.

Motivated by her growing interest in pediatric dermatology and the need for a board-certified pediatric dermatologist at Michigan Medicine, Dr. Mancuso took a leave of absence starting in January 2020, to pursue a one-year pediatric dermatology fellowship at Rady Children’s Hospital and the University of California San Diego. Throughout her fellowship training, she continued to support instruction in pediatric dermatology to residents and medical students at Michigan Medicine via virtual lectures and teaching sessions. In December 2020, Dr. Mancuso returned to Ann Arbor bringing advanced pediatric dermatology expertise to our patient care clinics and training programs. Promoted to Clinical Assistant Professor in February 2021, Dr. Mancuso has a joint appointment in our department and the Department of Pediatrics. As a board-certified pediatric dermatologist, she is leading work to develop and enhance our pediatric dermatology patient care and training programs, with plans for the future establishment of a pediatric dermatology fellowship.

Dr. Mancuso completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Michigan, graduated from the Wayne State University School of Medicine, and completed her dermatology residency training at Henry Ford Health System in Detroit Michigan. She is author of more than a dozen publications, including peer-review papers and book chapters within the field of dermatology. Dr. Mancuso is a member of the Women’s Dermatology Society (WDS) Resident, Fellow and Young Physicians Committee, a national group providing career guidance, mentorship, and networking opportunities to young WDS members. In addition, Dr. Mancuso currently chairs our department’s newly formed Innovation Committee, which aims to promote a culture of creativity, flexibility and curiosity that inspires new ideas and ways of thinking, behaving and improving our programs and workplace.
RESIDENCY PROGRAM

In March 2020, we successfully transitioned from fully in-person resident education to fully virtual resident education over a four-day period. Since that time, we have refined our virtual education to include more interactive components and have utilized the virtual platform to increase the number of invited speakers from other departments (this fiscal year alone: otolaryngology, urology, rheumatology, and hematology/oncology) and several outside institutions, as well.

We welcomed seven new house officers, the dermatology residency class of 2023, to our department in July 2020. New residents were supported by a blend of in-person and virtual orientation and bootcamp. The didactic curriculum continues to be robust, with weekly Diagnostic Conference, path slides, kodachromes and book club. Over the past few years, we have made significant efforts to increase the representation of skin of color in the weekly didactic content and to solidify the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the curriculum overall. The Anti-Racism Book Club was founded in 2020, as an optional extracurricular activity, and in 2021 was formally adopted into the resident curriculum. We had lectures on LGBTQ+ patient care, social justice, disparities, patients with disabilities, as well as multiple lectures on diversity in dermatology. In January 2021, we welcomed our MLK Visiting Professor, Dr. Susan Taylor, who spoke on hair and scalp disorders in skin of color patients, and also on mentorship and sponsorship of UIM medical students.

In person gatherings and travel remained limited during much of FY21. Annual Michigan Dermatological Society meetings were held virtually at Michigan Medicine and at other regional institutions. Based upon guidance from the ACGME, Dr. Alison Durham led our departments efforts to successfully adapt our resident recruitment efforts and interviews to a virtual format via Zoom. With pandemic conditions somewhat improved in the spring of 2021, we were able to host a small farewell reception for our graduating class, with a small in-person dinner and larger virtual ceremony attended by dermatology staff, house officers, faculty, family and friends.

Follow our residency program on Instagram!
instagram.com/umichderm

Residency Program Leadership

Yolanda Helfrich, MD  Program Director
Alison Durham, MD  Assistant Program Director
Frank Wang, MD  Assistant Program Director

Visiting Professors

All lectures were conducted virtually on Zoom

Martin Luther King Jr. Visiting Professor:
Susan Taylor, MD, Sandra J. Lazarus Associate Professor of Dermatology, University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine: “How to Approach Hair and Scalp Disorders in Skin of Color Patients” & “Research: A Tool for Mentorship and Sponsorship of UIM Medical Students”

Dermatology Pipeline Program Visiting Professor:
Temitayo Ogunleye, MD, Associate Professor of Dermatology, University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine: “CCCA/Scarring Alopecias” & “Increasing Diversity in Dermatology: Penn Derm Initiatives”

Michigan Dermatological Society Meeting Keynote Speaker:
Lawrence Eichenfield, MD, Distinguished Professor of Dermatology and Pediatrics, University of California San Diego School of Medicine: “Pediatric Inflammatory Skin Disease Update”
Visiting Professors (cont.)
All lectures were conducted virtually on Zoom

Carl Washington, MD, Dermatology Physician/Dermatologic Surgeon, Dermatology Associates of Georgia: “Skin Cancer and Outcome Disparities in People of Color”

Adewole Adamson, MD, MPP, Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine, University of Texas at Austin Dell Medical School in conversation with moderator Allison Billi, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor, University of Michigan Department of Dermatology: The Rapid Rise in Cutaneous Melanoma Diagnoses, N Engl J Med. 2021 Jan 7;384(1):72-79

Renee Howard, MD, Professor and Director of Dermatology, University of California San Francisco School of Medicine: “Skin Problems in Children with Developmental Disability”

Missale Mesfin, MD, Dermatology Physician/Dermatologic Surgeon, Forefront Dermatology, Virginia: “Careers in Dermatology”

Erica Stevens, MD, Dermatology Physician, Baylor School & White Health, Buda, TX, Adjunct Physician Instructor of Dermatology, University of Michigan Medical School: “Derm Career Journeys”

Guest Lecturers
All lectures were conducted virtually on Zoom

Nathan Vengalil, MD, PGY-1, Beaumont Dearborn & Taylor: “LGBTQ+ Care in Dermatology: Gay & Lesbian Patients (Part 1) & Transgender Patients (Part 2)”

Rasna Neelam, M4, University of Michigan Medical School: “Tear Gas Dermatitis”

Powell Perng, MD, PGY-4 Chief Dermatology Resident, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine: “Memorable Cases from My Residency”

Allison Zarbo, MD, Pediatric Dermatology Fellow, Henry Ford Health System: “Skin of Color: Pearls from Henry Ford Hospital”

Guest Lecturers (cont.)
All lectures were conducted virtually on Zoom

J. Michelle Kahlenberg, MD, PhD, Giles G. Bole, MD and Dorothy Mulkey, MD, Research Professor of Rheumatology, University of Michigan Medical School: “Rheumatology Curriculum: Immunology of Lupus – Where It All Goes Wrong”

Ruba Kado, MD, Adjunct Clinical Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine (Rheumatology), University of Michigan Medical School: “Rheumatology Curriculum: What Lies Beneath”

Kathryn Welch, MD, Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Michigan Medical School: “Review of Benign Vulvar Diseases”

Juan Andino, MD, and Javier Santiago, MD, PGY-3 Urology Residents, University of Michigan Medical School: “Surgical/Urologic Management of Dermatologic Diseases”

David Roofeh, MD, Clinical Lecturer of Internal Medicine (Rheumatology), University of Michigan Medical School: “Rheumatology Curriculum: Systemic Sclerosis”

Ryan Wilcox, MD, PhD, Associate Professor of Internal Medicine (Hematology/Oncology), University of Michigan Medical School: “Systemic Treatment of CTCL”

Andrew Joseph, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor of Otolaryngology (Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery), University of Michigan Medical School: “Hair Transplant Surgery”

Kelcey Stratton, PhD, Clinical Psychologist, Michigan Medicine Office of Counseling and Workplace Resilience, University of Michigan: “Suicide and Mental Health Awareness” & “Resilience and Positive Practices”

Ora Gewurz-Singer, MD, Associate Professor of Internal Medicine (Rheumatology), University of Michigan Medical School: “Rheumatology Core Curriculum Conference: Small Vessel Vasculitis”
Resident Distinction
Three University of Michigan Dermatology residents earned outstanding honors in the Michigan Dermatological Society (MDS) 2020 Resident Research Competition. Congratulations to Drs. Mio Nakamura and Grace Hile, who won first place awards for their research, and to Dr. Andrew Schuler, who received an honorable mention in the MDS research competition. Each first place winner presented their research at the MDS Annual Meeting on May 22, 2021.

Titles of the award winning U-M Dermatology research presentations are included below:

First Place:
Mio Nakamura, MD, PGY-4: “The Spectrum of Clinical and Genetic Findings in Hereditary Leiomyomatosis and Renal Cell Cancer (HLRCC) with Relevance to Patient Outcomes: A Retrospective Cohort Study from a Large Academic Tertiary Referral Center”

Grace Hile, MD, PGY-3: “Hippo Signaling is a Novel Regulator of Apoptosis and Photosensitivity in Lupus Keratinocytes”

Honorable Mention:

Inaugural Resident Night Clinic
The first Dermatology resident night clinic, initiated by resident physician Dr. Anne Allen, was held Thursday, September 10, 2020 at the Taubman Center. The goal of this clinic is to provide an opportunity for Michigan Medicine House Officers (interns, residents, fellows) to receive dermatologic care at a time that is convenient in their demanding schedules. We saw 39 patients and everyone was immensely grateful for the care they received.

Dr. Allen’s interest in developing a resident night clinic within dermatology was inspired by a similar program in obstetrics and gynecology. We hope it will encourage other U-M departments to start their own resident clinics. Much gratitude to all our residents, faculty, and staff who volunteered their evening to help our Michigan Medicine House Officers.

Resident and Faculty Social Events
It was undoubtedly an unusual year for social gatherings, but Dr. Mallory Joseph, social chair for our residency program, implemented creative virtual social events for the residents and faculty to stay connected to each other. She planned an array of virtual activities on Zoom including a resident ‘meet and greet’ to welcome the newest residency class; a donation-based resident yoga class where they raised over $100 for Gleaners Food Bank; a resident and faculty happy hour, and a holiday party. Despite the challenges of a virtual format, these events built camaraderie between the residents and faculty, and allowed them to learn more about one another.
Dr. Yolanda Helfrich and Dr. Mallory Joseph (co-chief resident 21-22) recently established a Residency Wellness Committee. Comprised of interested residents and faculty members, this committee began meeting in early July 2021.

The committee’s first task was to craft its mission statement:
*The mission of the University of Michigan Department of Dermatology Residency Wellness Committee is to promote the development of residents through initiatives and events that foster personal, professional, and emotional well-being. This committee strives to create an inclusive, respectful, and supportive environment that cultivates strong interpersonal relationships and a sense of belonging, fulfillment from clinical care, racial and cultural equity and equality, and personal growth.*

Events organized by the committee include a departmental ice cream social at Washtenaw Dairy, and an afternoon free of clinic during which residents learned how to invest into UM retirement accounts before heading to Erwin Orchards for some apple picking and donuts. Events will focus on building community through social events and shared volunteerism, tools to cultivate resilience and personal well-being, and organizational strategies to improve the work experience.
RESIDENCY CLASS OF 2021

Anne Allen, MD
Pediatric Dermatology Fellowship
University of San Diego
San Diego, CA

Olivia Chen, MD
Mohs Micrographic Surgery and Dermatologic Oncology Fellowship
MD Anderson
Houston, TX

Spencer Hawkins, MD
Advanced training in Mohs micrographic surgery and surgical hair restoration
Advanced Dermatology & Cosmetic Surgery
Orlando, FL, Petoskey, MI, Providence, RI

Tomas Huerta, MD
Mohs Micrographic Surgery and Dermatologic Oncology Fellowship
Medical University of South Carolina
Charleston, SC

Adam Leavitt, MD
Advanced training in surgical hair restoration and Private Practice
Advanced Dermatology & Cosmetic Surgery
Orlando, FL

Mio Nakamura, MD
Assistant Professor of Dermatology
University of Michigan Medical School
Ann Arbor, MI

Anne Nikle, MD
Associated Skin Care Specialists
Maple Grove, MN

Sean Singh, MD
Private Practice
Boca Raton, FL

Marie Stoddard Lyndsey, MD
West Dermatology
Riverside, CA

Dr. Yolanda Helfrich named 2021 William B. Taylor Best Resident Educator

The U-M Dermatology Residency Class of 2021 honored Dr. Helfrich as the William B. Taylor Best Resident Educator, for her compassionate and inclusive teaching style, her dedication to resident success and well-being, and her outstanding contributions to revitalize our residency program’s didactic curriculum and training opportunities.

Pictured left (back row): Adam Leavitt, Sean Singh, Spencer Hawkins, Tomas Huerta; (front row): Marie Stoddard Lyndsey, Anne Allen, Yolanda Helfrich, Anne Nikle, Mio Nakamura; (not pictured): Olivia Chen
Severine Cao, MD | Co-Chief Resident (2021-2022)
MD – Harvard Medical School
PGY-1 – Brigham and Women’s Hospital

Sara Fossum, MD, PhD | Co-Chief Resident (2021-2022)
MD – Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine
PGY-1 – NorthShore University Health System

Julie Gessler, MD
MD – University of Tennessee College of Medicine
PGY-1 – Tennessine Health Science Center

Grace Hile, MD
MD – Southern Illinois University School of Medicine
PGY-1 – St. Mary Mercy Hospital

Natalie Matthews, MD
MD – Brown University Alpert Medical School
PGY-1 – Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

Beth Pedersen Schuler, MD, PhD
MD – University of Michigan Medical School
PGY-1 – St. Mary Mercy Hospital

Mallory Joseph, MD | Co-Chief Resident (2021-2022)
MD – Wayne State University School of Medicine
PGY-1 – Beaumont Hospital Dearborn

Bo Wang, MD, PhD
MD – Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine
PGY-1 – Weill Cornell Medicine

Naomi Briones, MD
MD – University of Michigan Medical School
PGY-1 – St. Joseph Mercy Hospital

Alison Lee, MD, MHS
MD – Yale University School of Medicine
PGY-1 – Northwell Health

Kathryn Leonard, MD
MD – University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine
PGY-1 – University of Chicago

Rebecca Nguyen, MD
MD – University of Michigan Medical School
PGY-1 – University of California San Diego

Andrew Sauvageau, MD
MD – State University of New York at Buffalo School of Medicine
PGY-1 – Riverside Community Hospital

Eric Schadler, MD
MD – University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine
PGY-1 – University of Chicago

Andrew Schuler, MD
MD – University of Michigan Medical School
PGY-1 – Beaumont Hospital Dearborn
Dermatology Faculty and Residents Welcome New House Officers

Dermatology faculty and residents welcomed incoming house officers at an outdoor reception at Dr. Chris Bichakjian’s home on October 9, 2021.
CLINICAL FELLOWSHIPS

Micrographic Surgery and Dermatologic Oncology

Following completion of ACGME accredited Micrographic Surgery and Dermatologic Oncology (MSDO) fellowship training in our Cutaneous Surgery and Oncology Division, Drs. Dana Sachs and Megan Shelton joined the department’s surgical faculty team, providing Mohs surgery and management of advanced multidisciplinary care for patients with high-risk skin cancers. In December 2020, Dr. Cindy Parra matched to our MSDO fellowship program for training starting in July 2021.

Program director Dr. Alison Durham oversees Mohs surgery fellows as they complete our department’s one-year MSDO fellowship training program, which involves: Mohs surgery including advanced reconstruction; multidisciplinary non-melanoma skin cancer management; treatment of melanoma, Merkel cell carcinoma, and other rare tumors (over 1,500 new cases annually) including advanced multidisciplinary management of high-risk skin cancers.

Dana Sachs, MD
Clinical Professor of Dermatology
University of Michigan Medical School
Ann Arbor, MI

Megan Shelton, MD
Clinical Lecturer of Dermatology
University of Michigan Medical School
Ann Arbor, MI

Cindy Parra, MD
Dermatology Residency:
Weill Cornell Medical College

Note: We did not have a MSDO Fellow for the 2020-2021 academic year

Dermatopathology

The Department of Pathology, in conjunction with the Department of Dermatology, offers an ACGME-accredited, one-year fellowship in dermatopathology with emphasis on diagnostic dermatopathology. The program is well balanced and provides broad exposure to all areas of dermatopathology, including inflammatory dermatoses and cutaneous oncology.

Tyler Menge, MD
Dermatopathologist, CTA Pathology
Dermatologist, VA Healthcare System
Ann Arbor, MI

Nicholas Zoumberos, MD
Dermatopathology Faculty
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR

May Chan, MD
Clinical Professor of Pathology and Dermatology
Director, Dermatopathology Fellowship

Yuan Yu “Michael” Huang, MD
Dermatology Residency:
Indiana University School of Medicine

Behzad Salari, MD
Pathology & Immunology Residency:
Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis
The M1 Skin Sequence (formerly the M2 Dermatology Sequence before the curriculum redesign), has been incorporated into Foundations of Medicine III, Block 6. Our content falls near the end of the M1 year, and we were able to build upon the virtual content from 2020, transitioning previous in-person activities into the virtual space. In 2017 three interactive modules were created to teach students how to perform a total body skin exam (TBSE), how to identify ugly duckling lesions, and practicing lesion morphology and identification of malignant lesions. The TBSE was retained as a podcast, blending content with a recorded demonstration of the TBSE on a standardized patient. Utilizing breakout rooms in Zoom to create small groups, students had the opportunity to engage in the remaining activities, led by residents and faculty. We also held a virtual Grand Rounds, with live patients who were interviewed, and students had the opportunity to ask questions and engage with the patients’ personal experiences of living with skin disease. Derm Consults were also held virtually and continue to be a popular part of the Sequence. Overall, students were excited by the opportunities to engage with dermatology faculty and residents in small groups and for the active learning opportunities, which also serve to consolidate and reinforce concepts from lectures. For the past few years, there has been a concerted focus on improving DEI in the M1 curriculum. This past year, we also partnered with medical students as part of the health disparities curriculum effort. Students and medical school leadership noted particular success in this area. All lecturers updated their content to include more images of skin of color, and much thought was put toward updating language for consistency and for cultural competency.

With the curriculum redesign, students now go into the wards during their M2 year, after a several week-long course that launches them into the clinical space, Transition to Clerkships (TTC). Several years ago, the footprint of dermatology was expanded into the M2 year; this expansion represents the first significant increase in exposure to dermatology for all medical students in at least the past 15 years. Led by faculty, students progress through a case of a severe rash, learning a systematic approach to a patient presenting with a rash. This content also represents a new pedagogical approach, as the goal is less about teaching discrete facts about rashes, but rather about providing a mental framework so that when students are on the wards, they have a framework for how to go about diagnosing and treating a patient with a rash. In September 2020, we successfully transitioned this content to Zoom.

The M3 & M4 dermatology rotations experienced a notable increase in interest from students during the 20-21 academic year. This resulted in a significantly higher number of students from that year who are interested in pursuing dermatology residency. While all clerkships were suspended nationally for a few months in early 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, clinical students have been rotating through dermatology clinics since then. To make the clinical environment as safe as possible for patients and families, faculty, residents, staff, and the learners themselves, we restructured the clinical dermatology rotation, absorbing the 2-week cutaneous surgery oncology rotation. This has allowed for a reduction of students at any given clinical site, while continuing to provide a varied and engaging educational experience. Dedicated lectures to the students are now virtual, and students also give their end-of-rotation presentations to the department virtually as well.

Pictured above: Dr. Yolanda Helfrich (right) teaches surgery and suture techniques to M4 students utilizing synthetic skin
The Department of Dermatology works to champion Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) through various new and ongoing initiatives and programs:

**House Officer & Faculty Programs**

**Faculty and Resident Anti-Racist Bookclub**
Dermatology faculty and residents jointly read a designated book, or watch a documentary, then meet to discuss the material, sharing their thoughts and perspectives. The group meets on a quarterly basis.

**Disparities Thread**
The Residency Program Disparities Thread includes lectures on Skin of Color and on LGBTQ+ care in dermatology. Lectures on diversity are paired with implicit bias testing from Harvard University. (https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html).

**Annual MLK Visiting Professor**
Annually, the department invites a leading dermatologist to provide the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Lecture to clinical faculty, house officers and medical students addressing topics of health equity in dermatology, skin of color, or a similar DEI themed topic, in honor of the life and work of Dr. King.

**Clinical Outreach**

**U-M Migrant Farm Workers Clinic**
Dermatology faculty, residents and UMMS medical students volunteer for the U-M Migrant Farm Workers Clinic, participating in mobile clinics at a rotating group of local farms where migrant farm workers are housed, providing dermatology specialty care to individuals who are uninsured or underinsured.

**Dermatology Hope Clinic @ Michigan Medicine**
The department hosts free clinics to provide dermatology specialty care to individuals who are uninsured or underinsured. Patients are referred by the local Hope Clinic. Typically held quarterly at the Taubman Center, this clinic is fully volunteer-run, staffed by our clinical staff, faculty, residents and UMMS medical students.

**Programs for Current & Future Medical Students**

**Health Equity Visiting Clerkships**
Visiting medical students receive a stipend to support their participation in health equity and inclusion activities through the Office of Health Equity and Inclusion (OHEI).

**Student National Medical Association (SNMA) Conference and SimFest**
The department participates at the SNMA SimFest and has sponsored faculty, residents, and medical students to attend this annual event for current and future underrepresented minority medical students.

**Dermatology Pipeline Program**
Through our Pipeline Program, first year underrepresented-in-medicine (URIM) medical students are paired with a dermatology house officer, who serves as an advisor and guide. A visiting professor is invited annually through the Pipeline Program, to provide a lecture and meet with Pipeline students. In addition, students participate in a clinical skills and procedural skills workshop, physician shadowing, social and networking events.

**Middle/High School Outreach and Mentorship**
The department participates in multiple outreach programs and events, supported by the department, UMMS Doctors of Tomorrow and OHEI. These efforts introduce URIM middle school and high school students to careers in medicine and foster early interest in medicine among students, providing them with the skillset and guidance needed to help them pursue this path.

**Other Programs & Resources**

**Skin of Color Library Guide**
Together with U-M Library Staff, Dermatology maintains a library guide to serve as a resource for teaching, learning, research, and clinical practice related to skin of color in dermatology (https://guides.lib.umich.edu/skinofcolor).

**Staff DEI Video Series**
The department’s administrative team hosts a monthly meeting to jointly watch a short DEI-related video and then participates in a facilitated discussion in response to the video.
Due to restrictions put in place at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the University of Michigan rapidly ramped down all non-critical research laboratory activities in March 2020. Ramp-up began in phases starting in June 2020 at 30% lab personnel capacity. Dermatology research faculty and staff created staggered and alternate schedules to allow our researchers to access their lab space and resume paused studies. By July 2021, we were able to work at 100% lab personnel capacity that safely allowed for social distancing between lab members.

Although the transition to a remote work environment was challenging in many ways, dermatology saw an increase in the overall volume of grant applications submitted to external sponsors, growing from 25 in fiscal year 2020 to 47 in fiscal year 2021. In addition, 40 dermatology grant applications were submitted thus far in fiscal year 2022.

The transition to remote work, as well as the retirement of a long-standing research staff member brought about a restructuring of our research administrative staff. This adjustment consolidated department grants work, and refocused work assignments based upon individual talents and skillsets to allow for additional capacity for administration staff to learn and grow.

Grant submission data captured from M-Dash for fiscal year 2021

**NIH RANKING**

#8

based on grant awards for dermatology in federal fiscal year 2020 (10/1/2019–09/30/2020)
In September 2021, Dr. Yolanda Helfrich stepped down as Director of the Program for Clinical Research in Dermatology (PCRiD) after more than 10 years leading our department’s clinical research activities. In this role, she served as a primary investigator on multiple sponsored clinical trials and collaborated on translational research projects with other researchers within our department. In addition, she supervised faculty and residents serving as sub-investigators within the program and provided research mentorship to residents and medical students pursuing clinical research training in dermatology. As a member of the University of Michigan Research Board of Directors Clinical Trials Subcommittee, Dr. Helfrich helped implement the Clinical Trials Support Unit (CTSU) model at Michigan Medicine. She also served as one of the three inaugural medical directors for the Neurosciences and Sensory CTSU, which merged the research enterprises of Dermatology, Neurology, Neurosurgery, and Otolaryngology. Dr. Helfrich will continue to participate in clinical research within the department, serving as a senior faculty mentor and advisor to junior faculty, residents and medical students.

Newly appointed as PCRiD Director, Dr. Mio Nakamura obtained her M.S. in Clinical Research Design and Statistical Analysis from the University of Michigan School of Public Health and completed a two-year post-doctoral fellowship focused on psoriasis and clinical research at UCSF Dermatology. Although new to her role as its director, Dr. Nakamura is familiar with PCRiD from during her residency training and her prior work as a study coordinator while completing her graduate studies at Michigan. Dr. Nakamura will be leading efforts to expand clinical research activity, including establishing a new clinical research fellowship in our department.

**PROGRAM FOR CLINICAL RESEARCH IN DERMATOLOGY**

**PCRiD Main Objectives**
- To enhance patient care by providing opportunities for patients seeking new treatments
- To contribute to medical discovery by conducting clinical and translational studies to better understand dermatologic conditions and treatments
- To foster and train leaders in clinical and translational research

**Areas of Study**
- Plaque psoriasis
- Pustular psoriasis
- Atopic dermatitis
- Prurigo nodularis
- Cutaneous lupus
- Hidradenitis suppurativa
- Rosacea
- Stretch marks
- Aging skin
- Healthy skin

**BY THE NUMBERS**
- 12 Open Studies
- 13 Studies to Open Soon

**Mio Nakamura, MD**
Clinical Assistant Professor
Director, PCRiD

**Yolanda Helfrich, MD**
Clinical Associate Professor
Director, PCRiD (2011-2021)
Aging Skin and Photobiology of Skin | Fisher Lab

Our Skin Aging and Photobiology research team seeks to understand the molecular and cellular mechanisms that drive the aging process in human skin. Our goal is to gain fundamental knowledge regarding the pathogenesis of age-related diseases resulting from deleterious alterations of the dermal extracellular matrix microenvironment. We use novel mouse models to investigate new concepts of aging and are particularly interested in studying the interplay between the extracellular microenvironment and decline of cell function during the aging process.

In addition, our group is investigating the novel hypothesis that age-related changes in the dermal compartment drive skin cancer initiation. Additional translational research studies are examining the clinical and molecular characteristics of skin aging, mechanisms of connective tissue remodeling in human skin, and mechanisms of interventions for aging and photoaged skin.

Publication Spotlight


Lab Members

Gary Fisher – Harry Helfman Professor of Molecular Dermatology
Tianyuan He* – Assistant Research Scientist
Taihao Quan – Research Professor/Co-PI
Ken Calderone – Research Lab Technician
Yilei Cui – Research Lab Specialist
Chunfang Guo* – Research Lab Technician
Alex Ermilov – Research Lab Specialist
Joel Maust – Technical Writer

*Denotes lab member who departed
Autoimmunity/Immunogenetics in Skin | Gudjonsson Lab

The Skin Autoimmunity/Immunogenetics research group is investigating the immunological, genetic, and transcriptomic aspects of skin inflammatory and autoimmune diseases. Utilizing innovative bioinformatics, transcriptomic, and proteomic approaches, we have generated new insights into the nature of chronic autoimmune skin disorders, such as psoriasis, psoriatic arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus and hidradenitis suppurativa.

A striking feature of autoimmune diseases is their increased prevalence in females, with an estimated 78% of those people affected with autoimmune diseases being women. Our group has identified the transcription factor VGLL3 as a master regulator of female-biased autoimmunity. Ongoing studies are focused on how VGLL3 mediates and promotes autoimmune responses, with the overall aim of developing novel preventive and therapeutic measures that may have major implications against a wide range of autoimmune diseases.

Publication Spotlight


Lab Members

Johann Gudjonsson – Arthur C. Curtis Professor of Skin Molecular Immunology
Allison Billi – Assistant Professor
Olesya Plazyo** – Research Investigator
Mrinal Sarkar – Assistant Research Scientist
Yutein (Andy) Chung** – Research Fellow
Chang Zeng* – Research Fellow
Craig Dobry – Research Lab Specialist
Mehrnaz Gharaee-Kermani – Research Lab Specialist
Austin Kidder – Lab Technician
Xianying Xing – Research Lab Specialist
Joseph Kirma – Student Trainee
Ranjitha Uppala – Student Trainee
Enze Xing – Student Trainee

*Denotes lab member who has departed
**Denotes lab member who joined in FY22
Cutaneous Bioinformatics | Tsoi Lab

The Cutaneous Bioinformatics research group seeks to enhance the analysis and translation of experiments that study the genetics and genomics of different skin conditions. Our goal is to develop novel systems biology approaches and analysis pipeline for studies investigating the immunological mechanisms for different cutaneous diseases. Our research combines in silico discoveries and bench experiments to advance our understanding of genomics in autoimmune skin disorders. The Cutaneous Bioinformatics team works closely with other investigators and research teams within our department and at Michigan Medicine to advance research discovery.

Publication Spotlight


Advancement in predicting interactions between drugs used to treat psoriasis and its comorbidities by integrating molecular and clinical resources. Patrick MT, Bardhi R, Raja K, He K, Tsoi LC#. *J Am Med Inform Assoc.* 2021 Jun 12;28(6):1159-1167. PMID: 33544847; PMCID: PMC8200269.


Lab Members

Lam C. (Alex) Tsoi – Assistant Professor of Dermatology, Computational Medicine & Bioinformatics, and Biostatistics (SPH)
Matthew Patrick – Research Investigator
Sreeshandarajan Sutharzan* – Research Fellow
Rachael Wasikowski – Research Specialist Associate
Qinmengge Li – Student Trainee
Haihan Zhang – Student Trainee

*Denotes lab member who departed
Hair Follicle Morphogenesis, Wound Healing and Skin Cancer | Wong Lab

The Wong Lab studies how stem cells in the skin and hair follicle coordinate their behaviors to maintain barrier function, regenerate hair and heal wounds. These studies have important implications for patients who suffer from alopecia, acne, seborrheic dermatitis and ichthyosis.

In addition, our group has a long-standing interest in understanding the genetic factors that drive the formation of basal cell carcinoma (BCC), the most common cancer worldwide. We are particularly interested in studying the interplay between Hedgehog and Notch signaling, and how these two pathways work together to modulate tumorigenesis and drug response. As members of both the Departments of Dermatology, as well as Cell and Developmental Biology (CDB), we utilize basic and translational approaches to uncover novel insights into multiple aspects of skin biology.

Publication Spotlight


Lab Members

Sunny Wong – Associate Professor of Dermatology, and Cell and Developmental Biology
Shih-Ying Tsai – Research Fellow
Rachel Benedeck* – Lab Technician Associate
Noah Ford – Lab Technician Associate
Natalia Veniaminova – Research Lab Specialist
Owen Doane* – Student Trainee
Adrien Hartigan – Student Trainee
Thomas Huyge – Student Trainee
Virginia Ju – Student Trainee
Kenneth G Trieu – Student Trainee

*Denotes lab member who departed

For additional lab information and research highlights, please visit www.skinlab1.com

Sunny Wong and members of his laboratory say farewell to Karen Myers and Rachel Benedeck. Karen retired from dermatology after over 20 years of service at the University of Michigan. Rachel is pursuing a graduate degree at the University of Michigan.

Pictured above (left to right): Sunny Wong, Natalia Veniaminova, Shih-Ying (Sibyl) Tsai, Karen Myers, Rachel Benedeck, Noah Ford and Kenny Trieu
Psoriasis Genetics and Pathophysiology | Elder Lab

Our Psoriasis Genetics and Pathophysiology research group has a long-standing interest in genetic studies of psoriasis. This ongoing research utilizes the power of large genome-wide association studies, along with RNA-seq and ATAC-seq of blood-derived T-cell and dendritic cell subsets, and the largest collection of psoriasis genomic DNA samples in the world to enhance our mechanistic understanding of the genetic basis of psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis.

Our group also seeks to understand the pathogenic mechanisms that predispose patients with cutaneous psoriasis to develop psoriatic arthritis. The goal of this research is to identify biomarkers for the development of psoriatic arthritis in patients with cutaneous psoriasis and integrate those biomarkers to develop a clinically useful tool for psoriatic arthritis prediction.

Publication Spotlight


Lab Members

James T. Elder – Kirk D. Wuepper Professor of Molecular Genetic Dermatology
Rajan Nair – Associate Research Scientist
Zhaolin Zhang – Research Fellow
Philip Stuart – Research Lab Associate

Directed by Dr. Elder, our long-standing NIH T32 Training Program supports post-doctoral research training in Cell and Molecular Dermatology.

Current and recent T32 fellows:
Yutein Chung** – Research Fellow
William Giblin, Jr.* – Research Fellow
Grace Hile (House Officer) – Research Fellow
Michael McFadden – Research Fellow
Elisabeth Pedersen** (House Officer) – Research Fellow

*Denotes lab member who has departed
**Denotes lab member who joined in fiscal year 2022
Skin Cancer Biology | Dlugosz Lab

Our research team has a long-standing interest in understanding the molecular and cellular basis of non-melanoma skin cancer. This work is based heavily on the development and characterization of novel mouse models, complemented by analysis of human tissue samples and cell lines. Our current work addresses two types of non-melanoma skin cancer: basal cell carcinoma (BCC), the most common form of skin cancer; and Merkel cell carcinoma (MCC), a rare but highly aggressive form of skin cancer, linked in many cases to a viral infection.

Our BCC research centers upon defining the impact of aging on BCC tumorigenesis, examining crosstalk between BCC tumor cells and other cells in the tumor micro-environment, and investigating the basis of inter-tumor heterogeneity. Our MCC studies are focused on defining the MCC cell of origin, identifying the viral proteins that drive MCC development, elucidating transcription factors that contribute to MCC cell identity, and generating a robust mouse model for preclinical studies to ultimately improve treatment outcomes for patients with this deadly cancer. Our extensive expertise in mouse model development enables our laboratory to also contribute to studies on cancers arising in internal organs.

Publication Spotlight


Lab Members

- Andrzej Dlugosz – Poth Professor of Cutaneous Oncology, Professor of Dermatology, and Cell and Developmental Biology
- Marina Grachtchouk – Assistant Research Scientist
- Li-Jyun Syu – Assistant Research Scientist
- Monique Verhaegen – Research Assistant Professor/Co-PI
- Elisabeth Pedersen** (House Officer) – Research Fellow
- Dawn Wilbert – Lab Technician/Lab Manager
- Jacob Arche – Lab Technician
- Stefan Stoll – Research Lab Specialist Lead
- Anissa Alam** – Student Trainee
- Nihal Lingam** – Student Trainee
- Shreya Mishra** – Student Trainee
- Deepa Ramesh** – Student Trainee
- John Runge* – Student Trainee
- Emma Sortor** – Student Trainee
- Julia Van Goor* – Student Trainee
- Emily Walter** – Student Trainee

*Denotes lab member who departed
**Denotes lab member who joined in fiscal year 2022
FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: Dr. Allison Billi

Allison C. Billi, MD, PhD was recruited to the Department of Dermatology as an Assistant Professor in 2021. A rising star in the field of cutaneous immunology, Dr. Billi’s research explores the biological mechanisms that lead to female sex bias in autoimmune diseases such as systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). Development of new therapies for lupus has been slowed by our poor understanding of autoimmunity, and it is still not known why women are so disproportionately affected by this disease. Dr. Billi’s research aims to improve our knowledge on pathogenesis of lupus and other female-biased autoimmune diseases in pursuit of new therapeutic targets.

Dr. Billi has shown that overexpression of the transcription cofactor VGLL3 in the skin of mice causes a severe lupus-like rash and systemic autoimmune disease that mimics SLE in humans. In addition, she has shown that excess epidermal VGLL3 drives a program of proinflammatory gene expression that overlaps in both female skin and cutaneous lupus. Importantly, these findings strongly suggest VGLL3 serves a central role in causing lupus in women and that skin inflammation can precipitate systemic autoimmune disease.

A graduate of the University of Michigan Medical School Medical Scientist Training Program, Dr. Billi completed her dermatology residency and postdoctoral research training in the U-M Department of Dermatology. A productive scholar, she has co-authored more than 50 publications, including articles in prestigious scientific journals (e.g., Nature, Science, PLoS Genetics, and Science Translational Medicine). She has provided invited lectures at several top academic institutions, including Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Massachusetts General Hospital, the University of Pennsylvania, and Johns Hopkins University, and at various scientific conferences, including annual meetings of the Society for Investigative Dermatology.

Dr. Billi served as a Resident/Postdoctoral fellow representative to the Society for Investigative Dermatology Board of Directors and as an Associate Scientific Advisor for the Editors’ Choice section of Science Translational Medicine. She is recipient of a Dermatology Foundation(DF) Dermatological Investigator Research Fellowship award (2019), a DF Career Development Award in Women’s Health (2020-2021), and a recently funded National Institutes of Health (NIH) K08 grant (2021-2026) for her research studying the role of VGLL3 in sex bias. In 2021, She received the American Academy of Dermatology Young Investigator Award for Basic/Translational Research.

Dr. Billi provides patient care within the Division of Medical Dermatology at Michigan Medicine. She teaches students, residents, and others, both in her clinics and within the lab. She serves as a member of the department’s Residency Task Force, Telemedicine Workgroup, and Faculty Recruitment and Promotions Committee.
Mrinal K. Sarkar, PhD is an Assistant Research Scientist in the Department of Dermatology’s Skin Autoimmunity and Immunogenetics Research Program and central member of the lab of Dr. Johann Gudjonsson. An accomplished molecular biologist, Dr. Sarkar’s research is focused on the molecular genetics and genomics of inflammatory skin diseases, such as psoriasis, psoriatic arthritis, and cutaneous lupus.

Dr. Sarkar is helping to advance our understanding of skin immunology and autoimmune disease through cutting edge science, including transcriptomic studies utilizing CRISPR/Cas9-directed mutagenesis. CRISPR/Cas9 is a powerful gene-editing methodology that enables medical researchers to remove, add or alter sections of the DNA sequence in cells. Using this gene-editing technique, Dr. Sarkar has produced over 50 knockout (KO) cell lines and a double KO cell line, in which targeted genes have been disabled in the DNA of skin cells. His success in this work depends heavily upon a thorough knowledge of keratinocyte (skin cell) biology and innate immunity. Based upon his expertise in this area, Dr. Sarkar serves a primary role in the Functional Analytics Core of the U-M Skin Biology and Diseases Resource-based Center (UM-SBDRC), overseeing establishment of KO cell lines and their use in research by SBDRC members and various external research collaborations both nationally and internationally.

Dr. Sarkar has led multiple projects in the Gudjonsson lab, including research that demonstrated psoriasis as a chronic state of localized glucocorticoid deficiency, which potentiates inflammation and maintains altered epidermal differentiation. He also contributed critical data to help clarify the role of VGLL3 as the putative driver of the female-bias present in multiple autoimmune diseases such as Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE). These findings were published in top journals including Journal of Investigative Dermatology and Nature Immunology.

In related work completed with U-M Rheumatologist Dr. Michelle Kahlenberg, Dr. Sarkar established the role of interferon-κ (IFN-κ) in the basal inflammatory response of keratinocytes in systemic lupus and in driving SLE-associated photosensitivity. This work was published in the Annals of Rheumatic Diseases, the top rank journal in the field of Rheumatology.

Following his graduation from Jadavpur University (Kolkata, India), Dr. Sarkar came to the University of Michigan for post-doctoral training in the Department of Human Genetics (2011-2014) and the Gudjonsson lab (2014-2016). He joined the Department of Dermatology research faculty as a Research Investigator in 2016 and was promoted to Assistant Research Scientist in 2020. In addition to his research, Dr. Sarkar provides research training and guidance to students, research fellows and others pursuing research in the Gudjonsson lab. He has published more than 35 peer-reviewed papers, including in high impact journals such as Journal of Investigative Dermatology, Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases, Nature Communications, Nature Immunology, Genome Biology, Science Advances and Science Translational Medicine. He received a research award from the National Psoriasis Foundation (NPF) for his research exploring TY2K variants in Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis and has received Society for Investigative Dermatology (SID) travel awards to support his attendance at annual meetings. This past year the National Psoriasis Foundation (NPF) again selected Dr. Sarkar as recipient of a two-year translational research grant for his research proposal “Role of IL-36 in pustular psoriasis and its female skewing” (August 2021-July 2023).
SKIN BIOLOGY AND DISEASES RESOURCE-BASED CENTER

The University of Michigan Skin Biology and Diseases Resource-based Center (UM-SBDRC) is supported by a Center Grant (P30) funded by the National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS). The center provides multiple investigators with access to unique resources and expertise, not widely available to research groups in cutaneous biology. The center also supplies state-of-the-art genomic editing services and analyses to facilitate new discoveries, and offers training and guidance on experimental design, utilization and analyses of mouse models and bioinformatics methods.

BY THE NUMBERS

- **Members**: 62
- **Publications**: 23
- **Virtual Events**: 7
- **Projects Funded**: 6

UM-SBDRC Leadership

- **Johann Gudjonsson, MD, PhD**, Director, UM-SBDRC; Director, Administrative and Functional Analytics Cores
- **Andrzej Dlugosz, MD**, Associate Director, UM-SBDRC; Associate Director, Administrative Core; Director, Animal Modeling Core
- **J. Michelle Kahlenberg, MD, PhD**, Associate Director, Animal Modeling Core
- **Lam (Alex) Tsoi, PhD**, Associate Director, Functional Analytics Core
UM-SBDRC Visiting Speakers & Events
All lectures were conducted virtually

Bethany Perez White, PhD, Department of Dermatology, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine: “Checks and Balances: Receptor Tyrosine Kinase Signaling Networks Ensure Epidermal Homeostasis”

Lynn Petukhova, PhD, Department of Dermatology, Columbia University: “Leveraging biomedical data resources to improve our understanding of hidradenitis suppurativa”

Xiaomin Bao, PhD, Department of Molecular Biosciences, Northwestern University: “Transcriptional regulation of human epidermal tissue regeneration”

University of California Irvine and University of Michigan Joint Symposium for Skin Research
This virtual joint symposium featured presentations from investigators at both U-M and UCI, with break-out room discussions of skin research

Feiyang Ma, PhD, Molecular, Cell, & Developmental Biology, University of California, Los Angeles: “Single Cell and Spatial Transcriptomics Defines the Cellular Architecture of the Antimicrobial Response Network in Human Leprosy Granulomas”

Lindsey Seldin, PhD, Department of Cell & Developmental Biology, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine: “Impact of DNA Damage on Epidermal Homeostasis and Stem Cell Fate”

UM-SBDRC Pilot & Feasibility Awards

Year 2
Pilot Awards
Carole Parent, PhD & Pierre Coulombe, PhD: “Live imaging of neutrophil infiltration in stressed skin in real time in vivo”

Olesya Plazyo, PhD (Post-Doc) & Allison Billi, MD, PhD (Mentor): “Investigating the role of VGLL3 in antiviral immune responses”

Gary Fisher, PhD & Taihao Quan, MD, PhD: “The Role YAP/TAZ in Dermal Extracellular Matrix Homeostasis and Aging”

Innovation Awards
Matthew Patrick, PhD & Lam C. Tsoi, PhD: “Transcriptomic profiling for nascent RNA to identify distinct mediators of early inflammatory response in keratinocytes”

Zhaolin Zhang, PhD (Post-Doc) & James T. Elder, MD, PhD (Mentor): “Prediction of regulatory elements related to Th17 differentiation in skin-homing T cells”

Sunny Wong, PhD: “Targeting CD200 in a Mouse Model of Basal Cell Carcinoma”

UM-SBDRC 2nd Annual Symposium
Over 100 faculty, trainees, and research staff attended our virtual 2nd Annual Symposium, featuring world-renowned dermatologic scientist, Richard Gallo, MD, PhD, as our keynote speaker. Dr. Gallo presented his pioneering work examining the role of the skin microbiome in innate immunity and human disease.

The symposium also highlighted ongoing research sponsored by our Pilot & Feasibility funding, and a dozen researchers presented their work via virtual poster sessions.
SBDRC Core Services

Administrative Core
The UM-SBDRC aims to bring new investigators into the field, greatly facilitate the skin-related research activities of multiple investigators. It seeks to strengthen the research infrastructure for improved communication and interactions, significantly enhancing the visibility of the cutaneous research community at the University of Michigan, and leading to major new research initiatives and external support for team science projects in the field.

FY21 Achievements
• Increased UM-SBDRC membership
• Distributed our first bi-annual e-newsletter
• Funded 3 Pilot Awards and 3 Innovation Awards
• Offered a new joint Pilot opportunity between the University of California Irvine and University of Michigan as a special incentive to work across institutions and increase the use of our Core services. Awardee announcement pending NIAMS approval.
• Due to COVID-19, we hosted multiple special events via a virtual format including, five Visiting Speaker Series lectures, our 2nd U-M SBDRC Annual Symposium, and a joint UCI/UM Research Symposium.

Animal Modeling Core (AMC)
The AMC provides expertise and training specifically focused on mouse models relevant to cutaneous biology and disease. The services, resources, and techniques made available through this Core facilitate the development and use of state-of-the-art mouse models and provide relevant consultation, training, and troubleshooting for UM-SBDRC members and others interested in pursuing skin-related studies in mice.

FY21 Achievements
• Collaborated with U-M Core resource labs to create discounts for transgenic mouse production by UM-SBDRC members and set aside cost-share funds to cover these discounts
• Created AMC structure to provide services and training
• Three Pilot Awards and an Innovation Award involving mouse modeling studies were funded in Year 2 of our grant

Functional Analytics Core (FAC)
The FAC provides needed services that are not widely available for the cutaneous research community. The services, resources, and techniques made available through this Core provide UM-SBDRC members with highly innovative approaches to promote and accelerate ongoing research and help attract new research teams into the fold of cutaneous research.

FY21 Achievements
• Provided support to several studies that were published in major scientific journals, either through generation of KO lines or bioinformatic analyses
• Over 13 ongoing collaborations with multiple research teams at academic institutions across the U.S.
• Generated over 38 different single knock-out (KO) and one double KO keratinocyte cell lines
• In collaboration with Michigan Medicine Health Information Technology Services, we are completing a web-based interface and platform for our genomic database and expect this to be publicly available and accessible on the internet for UM-SBDRC members access during year 3 of our grant.
WEBSITE ACTIVITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DERMATOLOGY</th>
<th>CDLC</th>
<th>UM-SBDRC</th>
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<tr>
<td>147,991 total page views</td>
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<td>44,085 visitors</td>
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<td>An increase of 18% from FY20</td>
<td>An increase of 43% from FY20</td>
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medicine.umich.edu/dept/dermatology

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Skin Biology and Diseases Resource-based Center
medicine.umich.edu/dept/skin-biology-diseases-resource-based-center
Philanthropy supports a collaborative, productive, and hopeful research, education, and clinical environment.

At Michigan Medicine, we are working harder and have come further than ever before. On behalf of all the patients and families we serve, the Department of Dermatology sincerely thanks you for your continued partnership. Together, we are moving the needle toward powerful discovery and caring for people with diseases of the skin.

We hope you feel pride in the promising work underway and the pioneering approaches our teams are pursuing to understand, prevent, and effectively treat various disorders affecting skin including cancer, psoriasis, inflammatory/immunological conditions, and aging. Because of your support, our investigators can advance knowledge to ultimately improve the care and well-being of our patients.

One of the areas in which philanthropic dollars are currently making a major impact is in the Autoimmunity/Immunogenetics in Skin Research program. Autoimmune diseases affect up to 7.5 percent of the U.S. population and are among the leading causes of death and disability. Donor support has enabled many current projects with a primary focus on integrating basic immunology of skin and inflammatory skin diseases and genetics. For example, our researchers are examining the role of IL-13, an understudied inflammatory pathway in the pathogenesis of psoriasis. This work seeks to identify a novel therapeutic target in psoriasis, which we hope will lead to a more effective treatment for patients with this chronic, and often, devastating disease. Our researchers are also working on understanding the underlying pathology of autoimmune connective tissue diseases, focusing on the biological basis for their prominent gender-bias, as it is estimated that 78 percent of people affected with autoimmune diseases are women.

In addition to research, philanthropy has a highly impactful role in the educational experiences of our trainees. This is evidenced by the realization of a bequest gift by alumnus Dr. Paul Wang, as well as another recent bequest committed by Dottie Gerrity. These generous gifts will allow us to continue to expand educational opportunities for our trainees at Michigan Medicine and across the globe, and provide resources to bolster resident and medical student education and training in dermatology.

Our multidisciplinary team of faculty, researchers, and residents continues to push boundaries and think outside the box. Partners like you — who share our commitment to bring relief to all our patients and others whose lives are interrupted by common and rare skin disorders — help drive our mission to shape the future of dermatologic health.

We look forward to the year ahead and making substantive advances that will ultimately improve dermatology care for people here and across the globe.

Thank you.
Nondiscrimination Policy Statement

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