The Department of Dermatology is pleased to welcome six new first-year residents and one new second-year resident for the 2006/2007 academic year. They join two second-year and two third-year residents already participating in the UAB training program. All UAB Dermatology residents are qualified physicians who have completed a one-year internship in Internal Medicine and are now specializing in Dermatology.

The new first-year residents are: Jennifer Cafardi (M.D. from Drexel University College of Medicine), Seemal Desai (M.D. from Morehouse School of Medicine), Vlada Groysman (M.D. from the University of Arizona College of Medicine), Kristin Haushalter (M.D. from the University of Alabama School of Medicine), Aton Holzer (M.D. from Weill Medical College of Cornell University), and Elise Lirette (M.D. from LSU School of Medicine in New Orleans). The new second-year resident is Jennifer Hundley (M.D. from Wake Forest University School of Medicine).

In addition, the Department welcomes Rajat Varma, M.D. as the new Clinical Trials Fellow. Dr. Varma, under the supervision of Dr. Boni Elewski, will conduct the Department's numerous clinical trials. Dr. Varma graduated from the University of Alabama School of Medicine where he received an Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship. He served as Naval Flight Surgeon (primary care) from 2002 through 2006.

New UAB Dermatology Residents - Front row (l to r) Elise Lirette, MD, Jennifer Cafardi, MD, Jennifer Hundley, MD. Back row (l to r) Seemal Desai, MD, Vlada Groysman, MD, Kristin Haushalter, MD, Aton Holzer, MD
Candidiasis

Candidiasis is a term used for various infections caused by the Candida fungi. Candida fungi normally live in the mouth, gastrointestinal tract, and other parts of the human body without causing symptoms. However, if the bacteria that keep them under control are altered (by antibiotics, chemotherapy, or diseases such as diabetes or AIDS) candidiasis may result.

Different forms of candidiasis include: thrush (infection of the mouth), esophagitis, cutaneous (skin) candidiasis (including diaper rash and nail infections), vaginal yeast infection, and sepsis (infection that has spread to the bloodstream).

Candidiasis is diagnosed by physical examination or laboratory culture. Treatment consists of either topical or oral antifungal medication, which are quite effective.

Clinical Trial—Cutaneous Candidiasis

Boni Elewski, M.D. has recently initiated a study to examine the effectiveness of a new medicated cream (Naftifine HCl 1%) for the treatment of cutaneous candidiasis. Cutaneous (skin) candidiasis is a common infection affecting people with impaired immune systems as well as healthy people. It is usually located in warm, moist areas of the skin such as the axillae, groin, and beneath the breasts. Symptoms include red patches, occasional pustules, and itching.

The study involves four scheduled visits over a period of six weeks. Subjects must be 19 years old, must not be pregnant, must have no immune system disorder, and must have a diagnosis of cutaneous candidiasis verified by skin culture. Subjects must agree to photography of the affected skin. The study in involves four scheduled visits over a period of six weeks. Subjects must be 19 years old, must not be pregnant, must have no immune system disorder, and must have a diagnosis of cutaneous candidiasis verified by skin culture. Subjects must agree to photography of the affected skin.

Participants will receive free physical examination, free study drug, and a small stipend upon completion of the study.

Fungal Reference Laboratory

The University of Alabama at Birmingham is unique in having its own Fungal Reference Laboratory. The laboratory, under the direction of Boni Elewski, M.D., serves as a specialized resource for the diagnosis and treatment of fungal infections. Its many services include: a full time mycologist (technologist with expertise in fungi); diagnostic tests for numerous fungal illnesses including Onychomycosis (toe nail infection), tinea capitis (ring worm), and candidiasis; and guidance in diagnosis and management.

Dr. Elewski, who serves as Vice-Chair for clinical services, is an expert on cutaneous fungal infections. She has published numerous articles on fungi as they relate to the field of medicine — from epidemiology to diagnostic techniques. She is the author of the first and second editions of the textbook Cutaneous Fungal Infections.
Who are the pediatric dermatologists at UAB? Where do they see patients? UAB has two pediatric dermatologists, Dr. Amy Theos and Dr. Catherine Toms Lucas. Dr. Theos has been an Assistant Professor and Director of Pediatric Dermatology at UAB since 2001. She graduated from Louisiana State University School of Medicine in 1996, completed her Dermatology Residency at UAB in 2000, and specialized as a Pediatric Dermatology Fellow at Northwestern University in 2001. Dr. Lucas graduated from Louisiana State University Medical School in 2002 and completed her Dermatology Residency at UAB in 2006. She was appointed as an Assistant Professor of Dermatology in July, 2006. Drs. Theos and Lucas see pediatric patients at Children’s Hospital South on Acton Road.

What types of patients are seen in the Pediatric Dermatology clinic? How do I make an appointment? The clinic sees approximately 4500 patients per year with disorders of the hair, skin, and nails. Patients range from birth to age eighteen. Appointments can be made through the Children’s Hospital access center at 205-939-9141. Referrals are accepted but not required. Common problems include eczema, acne, warts, molluscum, congenital moles, and birthmarks.

What are the advantages of a specialized pediatric dermatology clinic? The dermatology clinic at Children’s Hospital South offers a large child-friendly waiting room, television in the examination rooms, easy parking, nurses specialized in pediatrics, and extended time for parent education. Pediatric dermatologists also offer specialized services that are unlikely to be available elsewhere. These include pulsed dye laser for the treatment of port wine stains and hemangiomas (birthmarks) as well as privileges at the Outpatient Surgical centers affiliated with Children's Hospital. The latter is important for younger children who may require anesthesia for surgical procedures.

What else should I know? Patients at UAB’s pediatric dermatology clinic may have the opportunity to participate in clinical trials. These often involve testing a new treatment or medication that may not be otherwise available. Although current trials are not enrolling new patients, new opportunities to participate arise frequently.

In addition to general pediatric dermatology, Dr. Theos has a research and clinical interest in genetic disorders of skin. Dr. Theos, in collaboration with Dr. Bruce Korf in the Department of Genetics, has started a genetic skin disorders clinic that meets monthly. The clinic is staffed by Dr. Theos, along with both a geneticist and a genetic counselor, and serves families afflicted with genetic skin disorders.
Why is UAB offering an ethnic skin disorders clinic?  Patients with darker skin tones have special dermatologic needs that set them apart from lighter-skinned patients. The presence of melanin has both protective effects (natural SPF) and deleterious effects (hyperpigmentation) that are impacted by cultural practices and beliefs. Additionally, people of African descent have hair that is coarser and more difficult to manage. It requires specialized techniques to acquire desired looks and patients often carry deep emotional feelings about texture, style, and loss of hair. Many patients seek a dermatologist with a similar ethnic background who may be better able to understand their practices and customs. Through Dr. Hartman’s training at UAB, he has been able to study with three different black dermatologists around the country who helped him to sharpen his clinical skills and broaden his spectrum of treatments.

What diseases or conditions are more common in people with darker skin?  Some of the conditions most commonly seen in the Ethnic Hair and Skin Clinic are fibrosing alopecia, pseudofolliculitis barbae, hyperpigmentation, melasma, folliculitis, keloids, sarcoidosis, traction alopecia, and discoid lupus.

What cosmetic procedures are offered?  Dr. Hartman offers laser assisted hair removal, chemical peels, sclerotherapy for leg veins, botox, soft tissue filler, and removal of facial “moles”. He hopes to soon offer hair transplantation as well. These treatments are all available to patients of any skin type.

Do people with darker skin get skin cancer or are they protected from it?  People with darker skin DO get skin cancer, though the incidence is considerably lower than other patients. When skin cancer does develop, it tends to present at a more advanced stage and carries a poor prognosis. The most dangerous skin cancer is melanoma, which appears on the hands and feet most often in black patients. Any new or changing mole should be evaluated, but especially when found on the hands and feet.

Ask the Dermatologist

Send your dermatology questions to Southern Skin editor Jennifer Frank at jfranf@uab.edu and they will be referred to the appropriate specialist. Due to the high volume of mail, not all questions will receive a reply.