

# MASTERCLASSES IN DERMATOLOGY™

*Meeting Minutes*



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### Lecture Summaries – Saturday, February 17, 2024

#### **Dr. Alice Gottlieb, MD PhD - What's New in Hidradenitis Suppurativa?**

Dr. Alice Gottlieb, MD PhD, provided insights into the latest developments in hidradenitis suppurativa (HS). HS, which has a comparable inflammatory burden to conditions like atopic dermatitis and psoriasis, significantly impacts patients' quality of life, with current treatments often falling short. Despite advancements with TNF inhibitors like adalimumab and infliximab, achieving optimal outcomes remains elusive, necessitating novel approaches. Excitingly, IL-17 inhibitors such as secukinumab, sonelokimab, and bimekizumab offer promising alternatives, with recent FDA approval of secukinumab in October 2023. It is challenging to compare adalimumab to secukinumab, as no direct comparator studies exist. Sonelokimab is an IL-17 A/F nanobody that shows promise for HS and is currently being studied in clinical trials. Jak inhibitors such as upadacitinib and povorcitinib also demonstrate potential, albeit with considerations for efficacy and safety. Interestingly, fostamatinib's success in targeting B cells provides a novel avenue for exploration. The potential of GLP-1 analog therapy in managing HS in patients with comorbid obesity adds another dimension to treatment strategies, reflecting ongoing efforts to alleviate the burden of this condition.

## **Dr. Joseph Merola, MD, MMSc - What's New in Psoriatic Arthritis?**

Dr. Joseph Merola, MD MMSc, dissected the intricate landscape of treatment options and evolving strategies for psoriatic arthritis (PsA) in 2024. The array of therapeutic approaches spans traditional DMARDs to IL-17 and IL-23 inhibitors, Jak inhibitors, CTLA-4-Ig inhibitors, and beyond, with ongoing developments. Drilling down into the six domains of PsA, from peripheral arthritis to skin manifestations and beyond, Dr. Merola highlighted the multifaceted nature of the disease and underscored the importance of tailored treatment approaches. Notably, IL-17 inhibitors like ixekizumab and secukinumab showcased similar efficacy in joint outcomes and superior efficacy in skin outcomes for PsA patients when compared to TNF-inhibitors in key studies. Excitingly, emerging therapies like bimekizumab and sonelokimab demonstrated strong efficacy in clinical trial data for PsA, raising optimism for enhanced patient outcomes. The imperative of shared decision-making and consideration of disease domains, comorbidities, patient preferences, and access emerged as a guiding principle in navigating the complex treatment landscape. Finally, Dr. Merola highlighted the prospect of preventing PsA altogether through initiatives like the PAMPA study, which underscores ongoing strides toward more proactive management approaches in PsA.

## **Dr. Valerie Callender, MD - Scarring Alopecias**

Dr. Valerie Callender, MD, delved into the topic of scarring alopecia, emphasizing the profound impact of hair loss on quality of life and the crucial role of early diagnosis and intervention in halting its progression. Focusing on central centrifugal cicatricial alopecia (CCCA), particularly prevalent among women of African descent, she highlighted the complexity of its pathology and the multifactorial nature of its development. Dr. Callender discussed the differential diagnosis of CCCA and the importance of biopsy for definitive diagnosis. She elucidated its clinical presentation and the range of symptoms, from tenderness to asymptomatic cases. She explored treatment options and discussed the evidence for medical interventions such as topical steroids, intralesional therapies, and emerging modalities like Jak inhibitors and PRP. Moreover, she underscored the significance of a comprehensive treatment protocol tailored to different phases of CCCA. Dr. Callender's insights shed light on the challenges and advancements in managing CCCA, and she advocated for a holistic approach rooted in early intervention and appreciation of patients' diverse needs.

## **Dr. Gil Yosipovitch, MD - Itch Pipeline Update**

Dr. Gil Yosipovitch, MD, provided a comprehensive update on treatments for chronic itch, addressing both immune and neural pathways. Discussing the increase in targeted therapies over the last decade, he highlighted dupilumab, which is used for chronic itch beyond atopic dermatitis and prurigo nodularis: examples include chronic pruritus of unknown origin, bullous pemphigoid, and for itch in cancer patients caused by PD1 checkpoint inhibitors. Other promising agents, such as lebrikizumab and nemolizumab, targeting IL-13 and IL-31 receptors, respectively, have shown promising data. Additionally, neural system-targeting drugs like TRP receptor antagonists and opioid receptor modulators offered alternative avenues. He discussed MRGPR antagonists, which are promising drugs for mast cell-associated itch. Dr. Yosipovitch ended his talk by discussing drugs that target the brain to reduce itch, such as ketamine infusions for intractable neuropathic itch. He emphasized the need for further research to address unresolved challenges and explore the potential of emerging targets.

### **Dr. Leon Kircik, MD - How to Build a Successful Medical Dermatology Practice**

Dr. Leon Kircik, MD, provided valuable insights into the business aspects of running a successful medical dermatology practice, emphasizing the importance of understanding the nuances between medical and cosmetic dermatology. Dr. Kircik highlighted the challenges and benefits of conducting clinical trials within a practice, underscoring the complexities of managing research partnerships and logistical requirements. Additionally, he emphasized the importance of developing strong patient trust through positive communication and maintaining a proactive, optimistic approach. Dr. Kircik's pragmatic advice and candid observations offer dermatologists practical business strategies, reminding them of the privilege and opportunity inherent in dermatological practice.

### **Dr. Joseph Merola, MD MMSc and Dr. Alice Gottlieb, MD PhD - PsA for the Dermatologist**

In a comprehensive session led by Dr. Joseph Merola and Dr. Alice Gottlieb, dermatologists were equipped with essential strategies for managing psoriatic arthritis (PsA) during routine dermatologic visits. Dr. Gottlieb underscored the critical role of dermatologists in detecting and addressing PsA early, emphasizing its disabling nature and the consequences of delayed diagnosis. Up to 41% of cases remain undiagnosed, and dermatologists are often the first to identify arthritis symptoms. Integrating screening tools like PEST and PsAID-12 into electronic medical records streamlines patient assessment and empowers individuals to actively participate in their care. Through insightful case presentations, including scenarios involving Medicare patients and complex comorbidities, attendees gained

valuable insights into PsA management. The session emphasized the importance of proactive screening, early intervention, and holistic management of PsA.

### **Dr. Brad Glick, DO, MPH, FAAD, FAOCD - Partnering with APPs in Practice**

In a compelling lecture, Dr. Brad Glick shed light on the invaluable contributions of advanced practice providers (APPs) to the field of dermatology. By offering patients greater access to dermatologic care and forming strong bonds with patients, nurse practitioners (NPs) and physician assistants (PAs) play a vital role in easing the burden of access and managing both routine and complex dermatologic issues. Moreover, the addition of APPs extends beyond patient care to yield tangible financial benefits for dermatology practices. Dr. Glick highlighted the significant growth of APPs in medicine, particularly dermatology, and emphasized their rigorous medical training and ability to provide safe, competent care across specialties. With dermatology appointments becoming increasingly prolonged and millions of Americans lacking access to primary care, the presence of APPs in dermatologic practice is pivotal in improving patient outcomes and ensuring the delivery of quality care. The lecture also underscored the importance of educational programs and training opportunities for APPs to further enhance their capabilities in dermatology.

### **Dr. Katherine Economy, MD - Drug Safety in Pregnancy: Immunosuppressive and Biologic Agents**

Dr. Katherine Economy delivered a valuable lecture on the intricacies of drug safety in pregnancy, mainly focusing on immunosuppressive and biologic agents. Highlighting the significant prevalence of medication use during pregnancy, she emphasized the importance of understanding metabolic and pharmacokinetic changes that can affect drug distribution and dosing. Using a case involving a patient with multiple autoimmune conditions, she navigated through the complexities of treatment decisions during pregnancy. She discussed the FDA pregnancy and lactation labeling rule and presented a table of guidelines for the use of immunosuppressive and biologic medications during pregnancy. While TNF-alpha drugs have a relatively robust safety profile during pregnancy, she cautioned about the lack of pregnancy data for other biologics. She stressed the importance of informed decision-making between healthcare providers and patients.

### **Dr. Joel Gelfand, MD - What's New in Phototherapy?**

Dr. Joel Gelfand provided an insightful overview of the evolving role of phototherapy in dermatology, particularly amidst an abundance of treatment options for inflammatory

dermatologic disease. Highlighting its cost-effectiveness and safety, Dr. Gelfand emphasized that phototherapy, whether administered in-office or at home, remains a valuable treatment for various dermatological conditions. The LITE Study demonstrated the non-inferiority of home phototherapy compared to office-based treatment for plaque and guttate psoriasis, with promising outcomes across patient and physician-reported measures. Additionally, findings suggested the potential benefits of combining UVB with specific topical agents for conditions like vitiligo and atopic dermatitis. Moreover, intriguing insights into the cardiovascular and metabolic effects of phototherapy underscored its broader therapeutic potential. Despite its proven efficacy, challenges such as inconvenience and insurance coverage persist, prompting a call for further research to optimize its use and integration with other treatments. Overall, phototherapy remains a cornerstone of dermatological care, offering a safe and patient-preferred option for various skin conditions.

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