

Skin Health



FROM THE KIMBERLY AND ERIC J. WALDMAN DEPARTMENT OF DERMATOLOGY

FALL/WINTER 2020

In Its Third Decade, the Skin of Color Center Continues to Fill an Essential Need

By **Carina Wong**, 12th Grade Student, Brooklyn Technical High School, Brooklyn, New York

The Skin of Color Center at Mount Sinai is a leader in its field thanks to the physicians whose imagination and hard work created and nurtured the first-of-its-kind dermatology center devoted to patients of color.

During the 1970s and 1980s, while working at the Ochsner Clinic in New Orleans, **Vincent A. DeLeo, MD**, was distressed to find there were significant racial disparities in dermatology care. Despite Louisiana's large Black population, very few skin treatments and cosmetic products were made for deeper skin tones. "When I tried to recommend makeup for young women with acne, I learned that the brands I had asked them to purchase did not exist in shades they could use," said Dr. DeLeo.

After relocating to New York City three decades ago, Dr. DeLeo remained aware of the lack of attention given to skin of color, and he decided to do something about it. In 1999, as Chair of Dermatology at St. Luke's - Roosevelt Hospital Center, Dr. DeLeo and

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Andrew F. Alexis, MD, MPH, Director of the Center, demonstrates safe hair removal using the 1064 nm Nd:YAG laser, with Medical Assistant Paisley Williams.



Mark G. Lebwohl, MD

A Conversation with Mark G. Lebwohl, MD

Reflections on the 40th Anniversary of the Department of Dermatology and His New Role as Dean for Clinical Therapeutics

On January 1, 2021, Chair of Dermatology Mark G. Lebwohl, MD, will be elevated to the newly created position of Dean for Clinical Therapeutics of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. During a conversation with the editor of *Skin Health*, Dr. Lebwohl reminisced about his four decades in the Department of Dermatology, which came into its own in 1980 after a century of being part of the Department of Medicine and just a year before Dr. Lebwohl began his dermatology residency. We also discussed his exciting new leadership role.

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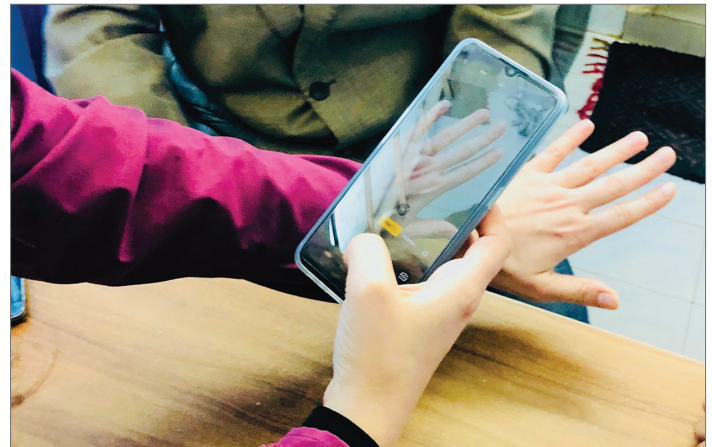
Protect Yourself and Those You Love

A Mobile App Enables Volunteer Dermatologists to Assist Relief Providers

Global crises like the mass displacement of refugees and the current pandemic have raised awareness of the need for access to medical specialists in distant locations. In an effort to address the scarcity of dermatologists at humanitarian aid sites, Mount Sinai faculty member **Nadine Kaskas, MD**, and two colleagues created a virtual dermatology service called **DermRelief**. Its mobile platform enables relief providers to obtain expert consultations for patients suffering from skin diseases. The editor of *Skin Health* had the good fortune to interview Dr. Kaskas and learn more about this wonderful project.



Dr. Nadine Kaskas traveled to Bangladesh in 2019 to volunteer at the relief site for Rohingya refugees fleeing Myanmar.



Dr. Kaskas teaches relief providers how to capture an image and upload it to the DermRelief app.

What is DermRelief?

Dr. Kaskas: DermRelief is a remote dermatology service that connects primary care doctors in resource-poor settings with expert dermatologists in the United States. The experts assist in the diagnosis and treatment of any condition that affects the patients' skin, hair, or nails. Our unique new platform called **DermRelief** is a free mobile app available for Android and iOS devices.

How did the idea for DermRelief come about?

Dr. Kaskas: It all started in 2016, when I connected with **Farah Moustafa, MD**, a fellow dermatologist based in Boston, and **Hisham Al Kukhun, MD**, an internist at Yale-New Haven Hospital. Dr. Al Kukhun had experience working with Syrian refugees in Jordan. The three of us started an informal WhatsApp group of volunteer physicians to assist with refugee health care via remote communications. Later, thanks to a grant from the Vaseline® Healing Project and Direct Relief, a nonprofit organization, we created the **DermRelief** mobile app.

How does the DermRelief app work?

Dr. Kaskas: International relief providers may download the **DermRelief** app and register as users. Once approved by the administrator, they are able to submit cases to US-based dermatologists. Because remote sites often have unreliable

Internet connections, and the doctors are working across time zones, the app uses a store-and-forward format in which case details and images are saved and transmitted as soon as possible. Dermatologists then review the cases and return their recommendations. **DermRelief** also has a chat feature that can be used for follow-up questions and answers.

What has DermRelief achieved since its launch in December of 2019?

Dr. Kaskas: Currently **DermRelief** is being piloted successfully to care for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, Syrian refugees in Jordan, and inpatients at Scottish Livingstone Hospital in Botswana. In less than a year, **DermRelief** has enlisted 130 users, including dermatologists and primary care providers. The mobile app has received excellent reviews and great feedback about its ease of use. Relief providers have been very appreciative of the support from our volunteer dermatologists and their quick and thorough consultations.

How can a dermatologist or relief provider sign up?

Dr. Kaskas: We would love to enlist more volunteer dermatologists and be able to expand **DermRelief** to additional areas in need. Board-certified dermatologists and health professionals working at international relief sites can learn more by emailing us at dermrelief@gmail.com.

The Skin of Color Center Fills an Essential Need *continued from page 1*

Susan C. Taylor, MD, founded the Skin of Color Center at that location, now part of the Mount Sinai Health System.

Today the Skin of Color Center that Drs. DeLeo and Taylor founded includes: a medical and aesthetic dermatology practice and a clinical research unit led by the Center's Director, **Andrew F. Alexis, MD, MPH**, at Mount Sinai Doctors Ansonia on Manhattan's Upper West Side; pediatric dermatology and vitiligo services offered by **Nanette Silverberg, MD**, on the Upper East Side; telehealth services by **Robin Buchholz, MD**; and medical dermatology at the Ambulatory Care Center at Mount Sinai Morningside. The Skin of Color Center offers culturally sensitive and specialized care to the spectrum of patient populations with richly pigmented skin types including, but not limited to, those of African, Latinx, Asian, Middle Eastern, and Native American ancestry.

The United States Census Bureau projects that individuals with skin of color will comprise about half of all patients by 2050. Mindful of the growing need for culturally competent physicians, the Skin of Color Center strives to fill gaps in dermatology training related to diverse skin types. While rotating through the Center, medical students and residents from around the world learn how to recognize the unique concerns of patients of color and manage their care with skill and compassion.

Over the past 16 years under the leadership of Dr. Alexis and committed faculty members, the Skin of Color Center has trained a number of research fellows and conducted extensive clinical studies on conditions such as melasma, acne, psoriasis, hair loss, scars, and keloids. "We are among the pioneers of safe approaches to laser hair removal and laser resurfacing for skin of color," said Dr. Alexis.



Drs. Susan C. Taylor (left) and Vincent A. DeLeo, founders of the Skin of Color Center

Faculty members of the Skin of Color Center have authored over 200 publications in the field, including the leading textbooks: *Skin of Color: A Practical Guide to Dermatologic Diagnosis and Treatment* (Andrew F. Alexis and Victoria H. Barbosa, Editors); *Pediatric Skin of Color* (Nanette B. Silverberg, Carola Duran-McKinster, and Yong-Kwang Tay, Editors); *Dermatology for Skin of Color* by A. Paul Kelly and Susan C. Taylor; and *Treatments for Skin of Color* by Susan C. Taylor and co-authors.

Now in its third decade, the Skin of Color Center continues to fulfill the vision of its founders: To provide vital services for patients of color and to foster the next generation of dermatologists who will deliver personalized care to individuals of every skin tone.

The Skin of Color Center Provides Care for:

- ▶ Acne blemishes and acne scarring
- ▶ Skin growths, birthmarks, and moles
- ▶ Infections of the skin and scalp
- ▶ Psoriasis, eczema, and skin rashes
- ▶ Dark marks, scars, and keloids
- ▶ Melasma (blotchy facial pigmentation)
- ▶ Vitiligo (loss of pigmentation)
- ▶ Beard folliculitis and ingrown hairs
- ▶ Scarring and non-scarring hair loss
- ▶ Nail deformities and discoloration
- ▶ Unwanted facial and body hair

To make an appointment for an in-person or telehealth visit with a dermatologist at the Skin of Color Center, call **212-523-6003**.

Skin Health

FROM THE KIMBERLY AND ERIC J. WALDMAN
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Our nameplate shows a normal skin surface under the microscope. Photo courtesy of Mark R. Wick, MD

Readers may email comments and suggestions to:
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A Conversation with Mark G. Lebwohl, MD *continued from page 1*

What was the Department like four decades ago?

Dr. Lebwohl: When I joined the faculty of the relatively new Department of Dermatology in 1983, there were only two clinical faculty members: **Raul Fleischmajer, MD**, a world-renowned scientist, and myself. We did not have a dermatopathology division nor even a single skin surgeon on staff. Cosmetic dermatology was in its infancy. But even then, the Department was known for training some of the best dermatologists in the country, thanks to our dedicated voluntary faculty.

What are the achievements you're most proud of?

Dr. Lebwohl: After Dr. Fleischmajer retired, I was honored to be appointed Chair in 1997. During my tenure the Department has grown to be one of the largest in the United States. Currently we have more than 50 staff faculty and nearly 250 voluntary faculty. Our residency program is ranked as the fourth best in the nation (of over 100 training programs) by Doximity, the leading online medical network. We have trained more than 30 heads of departments around the world. Our researchers and clinical faculty are credited with breakthroughs in psoriasis, atopic dermatitis, vitiligo, alopecia areata, skin cancers, precancers, and many rare but severe skin diseases. The leading textbook of dermatologic therapy comes from our Department, as do major textbooks on acne, safety in dermatologic surgery, and cutaneous manifestations of systemic diseases.

What are your predictions for the future of the Department?

Dr. Lebwohl: The future looks even brighter. Our Laboratory of Inflammatory Skin Diseases, under the direction of the newly appointed Chair, **Emma Guttman-Yassky, MD, PhD**, is responsible for the development of several new drugs for

atopic dermatitis, and we are working on promising therapies for alopecia areata and vitiligo. In 2018 we launched a genetics laboratory under the direction of **Anne Bowcock, PhD**, the Norman Orentreich Professor of Dermatology Research, who discovered the first psoriasis gene and the first ocular melanoma gene. Most recently, thanks to a major gift from **Kimberly and Eric J. Waldman**, we established the Waldman Melanoma and Skin Cancer Center, which will support cutting-edge melanoma research and offer the most advanced diagnostic procedures in the world.

What is your vision as Dean for Clinical Therapeutics?

Dr. Lebwohl: All the world has watched as the Kimberly and Eric J. Waldman Department of Dermatology introduced new treatments that have changed dermatology practice and improved patients' lives. Our accomplishments were made possible by innovative approaches and collaborations among clinical researchers, laboratories, and industry. In my new role, I hope to inspire and enable departments throughout the institution to achieve the same level of success.

The Dermatology Clinical Research Program is now enrolling patients with:

- Alopecia areata (ages 12+)
- Eczema (ages 6+)
- Hidradenitis suppurativa*
- Keloid scars*
- Pemphigus vulgaris*
- Psoriasis (all forms)*
- Psoriasis (all forms)*
- Vitiligo (loss of pigment)*

*Ages 18+

For more information please contact us at **212-241-3288**.

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Meet the New Chair of Dermatology: Emma Guttman-Yassky, MD, PhD

The Kimberly and Eric J. Waldman Department of Dermatology takes great pleasure in announcing the appointment of **Emma Guttman-Yassky, MD, PhD**, as our next Chair of Dermatology for the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and the Mount Sinai Health System. One of the world's foremost experts in inflammatory skin diseases, Dr. Guttman-Yassky will succeed **Mark G. Lebwohl, MD**, our Chair for the past 24 years, on January 1, 2021.

Dr. Guttman-Yassky will be the first woman to serve as Chair of an academic dermatology department in New York City. Since arriving at Mount Sinai in 2011, she has earned many accolades that include being selected as the Sol and Clara Kest Professor of Dermatology, the Vice Chair of Dermatology Research, the Director of the Center for Excellence in Eczema, and the Director of the Laboratory of Inflammatory Skin Diseases.

Dr. Guttman-Yassky will succeed
Mark G. Lebwohl, MD, our Chair for the
past 24 years, on January 1, 2021.

The groundbreaking research of Dr. Guttman-Yassky is focused on complex immune-mediated skin disorders like atopic dermatitis, contact dermatitis, alopecia areata, scarring alopecia, keloids, and ichthyosis. "Her work is already being transformed to new treatments that are changing the lives of patients around the globe," said **Dennis S. Charney, MD**, Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz Dean,

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and President for Academic Affairs for the Mount Sinai Health System.

Dr. Guttman-Yassky is also engaged in a busy clinical practice specializing in inflammatory skin diseases, and she is a mentor to graduate and postdoctoral fellows, medical students, residents, and junior faculty. She is a co-founder and the current President of the International Eczema Council that consists of more than 100 world leaders in the field. Her work has been recognized with prestigious awards, including the Research Achievement Award in Autoimmunity and Inflammation from the American Skin Association and the Bettina C. Hillman, MD, Lectureship for Therapeutic Innovation from the American Academy of Allergy and Immunology. Dr. Guttman-Yassky has authored more than 220 articles published in journals such as *The New England Journal of Medicine*, *Nature Immunology*, and the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*.



Emma Guttman-Yassky, MD, PhD

We applaud Dr. Guttman-Yassky's incredible journey that began with her childhood in Romania, her family's migration to Israel when she was 8 years old, and her educational achievements that include a medical degree, a PhD, and dermatology residencies in Israel and the United States. The fact that, within a single decade at Mount Sinai, she became a Professor of Dermatology, a Professor of Medicine, and the incoming Chair of Dermatology, is a testament to her commitment to excellence.

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Skin Health

FALL/WINTER 2020



Protect Yourself and Those You Love

“Don’t leave home without your mask,” says NIH Director Francis S. Collins, MD, PhD, citing evidence that face coverings really do save lives. It is encouraging to see the majority of New Yorkers following the experts’ advice to prevent COVID-19: Wear a mask; Be outdoors when possible; Avoid large gatherings; Socially distance; and Practice frequent hand washing.

In case you are someone who experiences mask-related skin rashes and acne-type eruptions (“maskne”), consider a telehealth visit to a dermatologist. You can also find helpful tips from Mount Sinai doctors at <https://health.mountsinai.org/blog/my-face-covering-is-causing-acne-what-can-i-do>.

Nearly half of Americans have postponed medical care during the pandemic, according to a recent Kaiser Family Foundation poll. We encourage everyone to catch up on health maintenance, vaccinations, and procedures that you might have put off, taking advantage of insurance-covered remote visits when possible.



I wear a mask...

“To stay safe,” says **Hassan Pinto**, Success Academy 2nd grader (left). “Because it’s the least I can do to help everyone,” says **Carina Wong**, Brooklyn Tech senior (right). Read Carina’s article about Mount Sinai’s Skin of Color Center on page 1.



F.Y.I. (For You Inside)

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