

# Dermatology News

PURSuing WITH EXCELLENCE THE MISSIONS OF RESEARCH EDUCATION AND PATIENT CARE

## Pediatric Dermatology—Infantile Hemangiomas

**T**HEY'RE KNOWN AS “strawberry birthmarks.” These tangled clusters of blood vessels usually develop before a baby is one month old and grow rapidly for several months. Infantile hemangiomas (IH) typically disappear completely in a few years. However, some can cause disfigurement, functional impairment or systemic complications.

**Kate Puttgen, M.D.**, is director of Pediatric Dermatology at Johns Hopkins and co-director of the Johns Hopkins Vascular Anomalies Group. “Hemangiomas must be treated when they interfere with breathing, feeding or develop ulceration. The majority are treated to avoid permanent disfigurement and to mitigate against the need for future surgery,” says Puttgen.

Steroids were the standard of care for treating IH, but research conducted by Puttgen and her colleagues, including **Bernard Cohen, M.D.**, helped lead the way for a new option. Propranolol, a beta blocker used for decades for cardiac disease in children and adults, was found to result in dramatic and well-tolerated response for hemangiomas. “The serendipitous discovery of propranolol’s effectiveness in treating hemangiomas has been one of the greatest medical advances in pediatric medicine in recent years and has rapidly revolutionized the way we care for infants and young children with hemangiomas,” says Puttgen. She adds, “In the beginning, we used to admit all infants to the hospital for two to three days to monitor their response to propranolol.” In recent years, with great success and few complications, there has



6-month-old Ava Goins with Kate Puttgen, M.D.

been a shift to an outpatient protocol, providing a more cost effective and less stressful experience for families. “Now, we are studying whether we can safely minimize our current outpatient monitoring in an effort to further improve cost effectiveness,” says Puttgen.

Oral propranolol is now approved by the Food and Drug Administration for treating hemangiomas that require intervention. Newer treatments are also

emerging for superficial hemangiomas. “We have had good success with topical timolol—available as an eye drop—to treat thin, superficial hemangiomas in many babies who would benefit from treatment but don’t require use of a systemic drug,” says Puttgen.

In a recent study, published in the journal *Pediatrics*, Puttgen and her team evaluated timolol’s safety and efficacy in treat-

ing infants with superficial hemangiomas. The multicenter retrospective cohort study looked at 731 patients. The results showed that topical timolol is well tolerated and a safe treatment option to help control IH growth in infants. Puttgen adds, “Timolol is a very useful addition to our choices for therapy so that we ensure all children we see with hemangiomas get the best individualized treatment available.” ■



### ECZEMA CARE CARD

Pediatric Dermatology is constantly improving the ways we provide care to all children and their families. Thanks to the generosity of Sharon and Greg Peters of Grosse Pointe Shores, Mich., we have been able to advance the clinical and educational mission of the eczema treatment program in Pediatric Dermatology. The Peters’ grandson Ryan, and his mother, Amy, a teacher, inspired the department to develop a durable and useful tool to help educate patients. With their support, the newly created eczema care card, printed on waterproof vinyl, can hang on a bathroom door knob as a ready reference for optimal skin-directed therapy for parents, caregivers and children. If you would like an eczema

care card, please email us at [traines1@jhmi.edu](mailto:traines1@jhmi.edu) and we will be pleased to send one to your home.

## Chairman's Corner



Sewon Kang, M.D.

**D**ERMATOLOGY HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PART of Johns Hopkins Medicine. Sir William Osler, one of our four founding physicians, published over 100 articles on dermatologic diseases dating back to the late 1800s. Dr. George W. Hambrick Jr. became Hopkins' first full-time dermatology professor in 1969. Yet dermatology did not become an independent department until 1977. And so this year, we mark our 40th anniversary as a full-fledged department at Johns Hopkins Medicine.

Our celebration begins on June 9, 2017, with the dedication of two portraits. We will posthumously honor Dr. Irwin M. Freedberg, who became the department's inaugural chairman in 1977, and Dr. Thomas T. Provost, who served as chairman and was named the first Noxell Professor of the department in 1981. During their tenures, both Dr. Freedberg and Dr. Provost built the foundation upon which the department still stands, and it is our honor to remember their legacies in this most fitting way.

The celebration continues on Nov. 11, 2017. On that Saturday, we will hold a day-long symposium

celebrating Hopkins Dermatology. Guest lecturers will include Dr. Tung-Tien "Henry" Sun, (professor of dermatology and urology at New York University), Dr. Russell Hall (professor and chair of dermatology at Duke), and Dr. Luis Diaz (professor and former chair of dermatology at UNC), and former Hopkins Dermatology faculty Toni Hood, Evan Farmer and Robert Weiss. They all have strong ties to Johns Hopkins as former trainees or faculty. The program will also feature the research of many of our current faculty members. Later that evening, we will gather for a gala dinner at the historic Engineers Club.

Details of the day will be forthcoming, and available on our departmental website. If you have any questions related to the symposium or the gala, please feel free to contact Toba Rainess at [traines1@jhmi.edu](mailto:traines1@jhmi.edu) or call 443-287-2036.

We look forward to marking this milestone year, and hope you will join us in our celebrations.

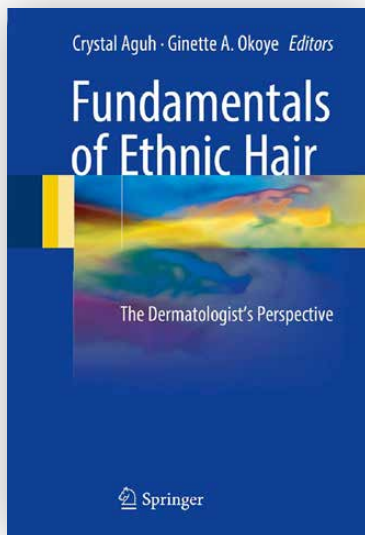
Sincerely,  
Sewon Kang, M.D.  
*Noxell Professor & Chairman*

# MERIT Program: Answering a Call to Action

**I**NSUFFICIENT REPRESENTATION OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS and Hispanics working in the field of dermatology has led to a call to action. The Johns Hopkins Department of Dermatology is answering the call by partnering with the Medical Education Resources Initiative for Teens (MERIT) Health Leadership Academy, and the results are inspiring. MERIT, created in 2010 by Johns Hopkins medical students, seeks to eliminate health care disparities by transforming underrepresented high school students into health care leaders. "These students are eager to learn about dermatology and excited to participate in the program," says **Shawn Kwatra, M.D.**, a third-year resident who, along with **Ginette Okoye, M.D.**, director of the Ethnic Skin Program, and other colleagues, designed an instructional and mentoring program introducing dermatology concepts to the MERIT scholars. "We spend a few weeks with them in the summer, and in that time, you can see their minds expand," adds Kwatra. "I know we are making a difference in their young lives and, hopefully, inspiring them to become dermatologists and scientists." The dermatology team is looking forward to taking on a new group of MERIT scholars this summer. ■



Angel Byrd, M.D., Ph.D., Shawn Kwatra, M.D., Crystal Aguh, M.D., and Ginette Okoye, M.D., with three MERIT Program scholars.



**“IRONICALLY, SOME HAIRSTYLES MEANT TO IMPROVE OUR SELF-CONFIDENCE ACTUALLY LEAD TO HAIR AND SCALP DAMAGE.”**

— CRYSTAL AGUH

# The Fundamentals of Ethnic Hair Care

**H**AIR LOSS HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY more common in ethnic populations. Many styling practices such as chemical straightening and extensions exacerbate the problem. “Hair is a cornerstone of self-esteem and identity for many people,” says **Crystal Aguh, M.D.**, assistant professor of dermatology at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, “but ironically, some hairstyles meant to improve our self-confidence actually lead to hair and scalp damage.” Patients often turn to their dermatologist for answers to their hair loss dilemmas and they do not always like what they hear. “Dermatologists need to be conscious of the fact that many high- and moderate-risk hairstyles greatly improve hair manageability, and simply telling patients to abandon them won’t work for everyone,” Aguh says. “Instead, physicians

can educate themselves to speak with patients about making the best hairstyling choices to minimize preventable hair loss.”

Educating dermatologists is the focus of a new textbook authored by Aguh and **Ginette Okoye, M.D.**, director of the Ethnic Skin Program at Johns Hopkins Dermatology. *Fundamentals of Ethnic Hair: The Dermatologist’s Perspective*, published in December by Springer International Publishing, offers both scientific and practical management tips for styling trends. Chapters include physical and chemical properties of the hair, thermal and chemical straightening, extensions, and razor bumps. “Our recommendations are acceptable for those of all ethnic backgrounds experiencing hair breakage, and dermatologists should feel comfortable discussing these techniques with every patient,” says Aguh. ■

## Inspiring Leadership

**G**EORGE W. HAMBRICK, JR., M.D., arrived at Johns Hopkins in 1966 and quickly rose to a leadership role, becoming the first full-time professor of dermatology in 1969. Hambrick served as an educator, clinician-scientist and mentor for young investigators at Johns Hopkins for nearly a decade. He eventually went on to direct the Department of Dermatology at the University of Cincinnati. It was there, in 1976, that a young resident began his education with Hambrick, and it changed his life. “Dr. Hambrick provided the fundamentals that would put me in great stead wherever I went,” says Thomas G. Olsen, M.D., a dermatologist and dermatopathologist in Dayton, Ohio, who received his medical degree from the Indiana University School of Medicine. “Dr. Hambrick was very demanding, but when you were done, he was your

biggest advocate.” In 1980, at Hambrick’s urging, Olsen joined the Department of Dermatology at Yale as an assistant professor and researcher. Olsen challenged his residents and students to think in new ways, just as Hambrick had challenged him. Olsen adds, “George expected you to do a lot, and if you were trying to part-time it, that wasn’t going to work with him.”

In 2012, Hopkins Dermatology created The *George W. Hambrick Jr., M.D., Leadership Fund in Oncological Dermatology* to honor Hambrick’s legacy in the field of dermatology. When Olsen learned of the fund, he was happy to make a significant contribution. “George Hambrick believed strongly in education, teaching, and excellence. I thought Johns Hopkins was a fitting and appropriate institution for this kind of recognition for him.” The Hambrick endowment fund



**George W. Hambrick, Jr. (left) and Thomas G. Olsen**

will support prominent faculty members in the Department of Dermatology who build on Hambrick’s record of excellence in promoting healthy skin through skin cancer research and care. Olsen continues to invest in the Hambrick Fund. “I feel fortunate to be able to give back in this way. Supporting the fund is meaningful since George was most deserving and worthy.” ■

If you would like to contribute to The *George W. Hambrick Jr., M.D., Leadership Fund in Oncological Dermatology*, please visit our website at [bit.ly/22JHgive](http://bit.ly/22JHgive) or call 443-287-2036.



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*Dermatology News* is published twice a year at  
[hopkinsmedicine.org/dermatology](http://hopkinsmedicine.org/dermatology)

**Sewon Kang, M.D.**  
*Noxell Professor and Chairman*  
Toba Rainess, *Editor*

## Awards & Recognition

### American Academy of Dermatology 2017 Presidential Citations:



**Bernard Cohen, M.D.**, was recognized for his contributions to the development of guidelines for the use of local anesthesia in office-based dermatologic care.



**Sewon Kang, M.D.**, was recognized for his contributions to the development of guidelines for care for the management of acne vulgaris.



**Ginette Okoye, M.D.**, was recognized for her commitment to promote diversity in dermatology.



**Elizabeth G. Richard, M.D.**, was recognized for her efforts in advocacy on behalf of the Maryland Dermatologic Society.



**Shawn Kwatra, M.D.**, won the Resident/Fellow Oral Presentation Award at the Skin of Color Society's 13th annual Scientific Symposium.

### Miller-Coulson Academy of Clinical Excellence at the Johns Hopkins Center for Innovate Medicine



**Manisha Loss, M.D.**, was inducted into the academy for clinical excellence in patient care.



**Lark Guss, M.D.**, was recognized with the 2017 Frank L. Coulson Jr. Resident Award for Clinical Excellence

## Supporting Our Work

The Johns Hopkins Department of Dermatology strives to provide outstanding individualized diagnosis and treatment of skin disease; educate the next generation of dermatologists to become leaders in medical dermatology, cosmetic dermatology, dermatologic surgery, dermatopathology and investigative dermatology, and develop new and better strategies to diagnose and treat skin disease through groundbreaking research.

**If you wish to support any program or research project with a tax-deductible donation, please visit : [bit.ly/22JHgive](http://bit.ly/22JHgive)**