

### **MDS 2012/2013 Mentorship summary**

During the past month of August 2012, I had the opportunity to complete a one month long mentorship with Dr. Ellen J. Kim at the Department of Dermatology of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine funded by the MDS Mentorship Program. As a recipient of this award for the year 2012-2013, I am very grateful to the MDS for giving me one of the most rewarding experiences of my career as a dermatologist in training. One that finally resulted in me deciding to commit myself to academic medicine and to pursue a life invested in clinical research.

I consider my MDS mentorship experience with Dr. Kim as a very productive one. My daily responsibilities included attendance at morning rounds in the Extracorporeal Photopheresis Unit (ECP), active participation in the care of patients at the cutaneous lymphoma clinics with Dr. Kim, attendance to academic activities within the department of dermatology, which included grand rounds, resident academic conferences and clinical unknowns, as well as the opportunity to have one-on-one discussions with my mentor on the scientific literature relevant to the care of patients with cutaneous lymphoma with specific emphasis on cutaneous T-cell lymphoma (CTCL). I also had the opportunity to participate in group discussions with Dr. Alan Rook, expert in the diagnosis and management of patients with CTCL. The direct exposure to the ECP unit was particularly significant for me since there is currently no ECP unit at my institution. This gave me the chance to evaluate patients with a more advanced diagnosis of CTCL and Sézary syndrome and to monitor their progress during their stay at the ECP unit. Knowledge of the inner workings of the ECP unit was also very insightful and without this mentorship it would have been highly unlikely for me to ever be exposed to it. As a result of this experience, I felt more prepared to tackle the daily workings of the lymphoma clinic at my institution. I believe my increased knowledge on the subject, as well as the experiences encountered, afforded me with the resources to be able to provide my patients in Puerto Rico with a better degree of care and to offer guidance to my fellow residents who had not been exposed to other alternative treatment options for this disease. However, my experience was not only limited to patients with CTCL. I was also given the opportunity to attend other clinics with distinguished faculty of the Department of Dermatology including Dr. Todd Ridky and Dr. Victoria P. Werth, among others. In addition, during my 4-week mentorship I had the opportunity to collaborate with the writing of two case reports. As part of Dr. Kim's efforts for me to have a well-rounded experience, she allowed me to engage in the writing of case-reports either with her or with another member of the faculty within the Department of Dermatology, in this case Dr. Nicole Fett. This case report was subsequently published in the *Journal of Dermatology*<sup>1</sup>.

Finally, but nonetheless important, my experience with the MDS mentorship program prompted me to pursue a post-doctoral fellowship at the Department of Dermatology of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine under the mentorship of Dr. Joel Gelfand. My encounter with Dr. Gelfand also led me to pursue a path in pharmacoepidemiologic research an area that is at present underrepresented within my specialty. As such, I am also currently pursuing a Master's of Science in Clinical Epidemiology (MSCE) at said institution. I strongly believe that none of this would have resulted had I not been part of the MDS mentorship program, and for that I am very grateful.

1. Chiesa-Fuxench ZC, Kim EJ, Schaffer A, Fett N. Linear lupus panniculitis of the scalp presenting as alopecia along Blaschko's lines: a variant of lupus panniculitis not unique to East Asians. *J Dermatol*. 2013 Mar;40(3):231-2.