

MDS Mentorship Program Summary Report

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Primary Mentor: Dr. Jennie Clarke, MD
Secondary Mentors: Drs. Hansen, Hull, Leiferman, Sontheimer, Woodcock, & Zone
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The Medical Dermatology Society (MDS) Mentorship Award has provided me an invaluable experience in autoimmune and rheumatologic dermatology. This award comes at a critical time as I transition from residency to faculty at the University of Rochester. I am currently establishing both a new rheumatologic dermatology clinic and a cutaneous lupus basic science laboratory.

The University of Utah Department of Dermatology has a dedicated Autoimmune Skin Disease Clinic with many providers who specialize in autoimmune dermatology. During this 4-week experience, I was able to see as many patients with autoimmune skin disease as I had seen in the previous three years of dermatology residency. My primary focus was to learn to better care for patients with autoimmune connective tissue diseases of the skin, such as lupus, dermatomyositis, and scleroderma. Much of my time was spent with Drs. Clarke and Sontheimer, who have a wealth of experience in lupus and dermatomyositis, and Dr. Hansen, who has a particular interest in scleroderma. In addition to this primary goal, I spent a significant amount of time with Drs. Zone, Hull and Woodcock, experts in general autoimmune skin disease and autoimmune blistering disease. There is considerable overlap in the management of these autoimmune skin diseases. I was able to gain experience with different treatment approaches and modalities not utilized or available during my prior training and have already started to implement changes in how I approach patient care based on this experience. I also spent some time at the microscope learning immunodermatology with Drs. Zone and Leiferman, which will be immensely helpful given a significant part of my research involves histologic examination of skin from patients with cutaneous lupus.

Perhaps as important as the clinical knowledge and experience I gained was the opportunity to develop mentoring relationships with these expert clinicians. We had many great discussions, not only about patient care, but also concerning ongoing and potential research opportunities. I anticipate reaching out to them as I encounter challenging diagnostic dilemmas and difficult management situations, as well as for career advice and to establish clinical research collaborations. I am grateful to both the MDS for this incredible experience and the many renowned dermatologists at the University of Utah with whom I had the pleasure of working.