

Mentee: Xiying Fan, MD, PhD
University of California – Irvine

Mentor: Youn Kim, MD
Stanford University

Medical Dermatology Society Mentorship Award Experience Report

Early during my residency at the University of California – Irvine, I developed an interest in cutaneous oncology, especially cutaneous lymphoma. With support from the Medical Dermatology Society Mentorship Award, I had the privilege of spending three weeks at Stanford University in Fall 2023, learning about cutaneous lymphoma, supportive dermato-oncology, and Merkel cell carcinoma.

My primary MDS mentor was Dr. Youn Kim, a leading expert in the field of cutaneous lymphoma. During my rotation at Stanford, I met patients with rare diagnoses, such as extranodal NK/T lymphoma, gamma-delta T-cell lymphoma, and T-prolymphocytic leukemia. I also saw numerous patients with mycosis fungoides representing the full scope of the disease, ranging from indolent patches to aggressive, relapsed/refractory disease. In addition to expanding my fund of knowledge about the clinical presentation, diagnosis, and management of these rare and challenging diseases, I also benefited from observing the inner workings of Stanford's multidisciplinary cutaneous lymphoma clinic. This included the collaborative co-management of cutaneous lymphoma patients together with medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, and bone marrow transplant physicians, as well as operational considerations such as clinic flow and the indispensable roles of support staff. Going forward, these observations will have a major impact in shaping my own practice in the care of patients with cutaneous lymphoma.

Besides Dr. Kim, I also received guidance from other faculty in the cutaneous lymphoma clinic, including dermatologists Drs. Erica Wang and Jennifer Wang, and oncologist Dr. Michael Khodadoust. I participated in dermatopathology signout with Dr. Roberto Novoa, which allowed me to better appreciate the clinicopathologic correlation that is critical to every diagnosis of cutaneous lymphoma. I was also fortunate to work with Dr. Lisa Zaba in her Merkel cell carcinoma clinic, and Dr. Bernice Kwong in her supportive dermato-oncology clinic as well as rounding on the inpatient consult service. From each of these experiences, I gathered many clinical pearls that will help me in my practice, and everyone I worked with was incredibly kind, welcoming, and supportive.

After finishing my rotation and returning to UCI, I was able to use the knowledge I acquired to be a resource to my department on cutaneous lymphoma. I gave a presentation on the management of advanced stage cutaneous lymphoma that was very well received. Upon graduation from residency, I plan to stay in academic medicine and hope to continue working in this field. I am grateful to the Medical Dermatology Society for this wonderful opportunity and the mentors and role models I have gained.