

# SKIN OF COLOR TREATMENT CONSIDERATIONS

The Skin of Color Society promotes awareness and excellence in skin of color dermatology amid a diversifying population.

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The need for awareness and education about skin of color dermatology has never been greater, as we steadily diversify as a nation and advance closer toward the US Census projection estimating that individuals with skin of color will comprise more than 50% of the US population by 2050.

Moreover, as the field of dermatology continues to evolve in exciting ways, and our patients benefit from the latest scientific discoveries and technological developments for treating and managing a wide range of dermatologic conditions, it is particularly important

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That's where the Skin of Color Society (SOCS) comes in.

## THE SOCIETY

Founded in 2004 by Susan C. Taylor, MD, FAAD, the SOCS is an international organization of dermatologists driven by the mission to promote widespread awareness and excellence within our profession. The Society

fosters and maintains partnerships with dermatologists from the national and international communities, professional medical organizations, corporate and industry groups, and the community to ensure success in serving all individuals with skin of color. To this end, we offer a variety of innovative programs and initiatives that are designed to educate physicians, residents, nonphysician scientists, patients, the media, government, third parties (such as managed care, insurance organizations, and other entities), and the public at-large. As a growing international community with a shared special interest in skin of color dermatology, we provide a rich forum for the exchange of information and

expertise to benefit all—with the end goal of ensuring the highest standards in patient care and safety.

As part of our organization's work, we recently held the 3rd Annual SOCS Media Day in New York City, which was created to advance patient and public understanding about a wide spectrum of skin of color issues—from every day, aesthetic concerns affecting the hair, skin, and nails, to more serious and life-altering dermatologic conditions and systemic illnesses with dermatologic manifestations.



Figure 1. Moderator Lee Thomas, an Emmy Award-winning entertainment reporter, author of *Turning White*, and a vitiligo patient leader delivered an inspirational opening talk about his own vitiligo journey.

## MEDIA DAY

Featuring several SOCS leaders as expert presenters, this informative program was moderated by Lee Thomas, an Emmy Award-winning entertainment reporter, author of *Turning White* and a vitiligo patient leader (Figure 1). He delivered an inspirational opening talk about his own vitiligo journey, and his remarks set the stage for heightening awareness and understanding of the psychosocial aspects of dermatologic diseases from the patient's perspective. As a vitiligo patient leader, he aptly said, "Support plus education equals hope."

Our dynamic team of SOCS experts (Figure 2) shared information and insights about an array of dermatologic conditions and issues affecting individuals with skin of color.

With my co-presenter, Dr Taylor, an associate professor of dermatology at the Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, we addressed the topic, "Managing Skin of Color Issues From the Inside Out," covering safe and effective



Figure 2. The 2017 SOCS Media Day Team, from left: Seemal R. Desai, MD, FAAD; Nada Elbuluk, MD, MSc, FAAD; Valerie D. Callender, MD, FAAD; Maritza Perez, MD, FAAD; Susan C. Taylor, MD, FAAD; Andrew F. Alexis, MD, MPH, FAAD; and Babar Rao, MD, FAAD (not shown).

approaches and combination therapies that are useful in treating pigmentary disorders, which are the most common complaints we see in our skin of color patients. We discussed options for managing hypopigmentation, depigmentation, and hyperpigmentation conditions and emphasized the need for patient compliance regarding the vigilant and proper use of sunscreen—which many individuals with skin of color do not realize as necessary.

To raise awareness about dermatologic diseases and external signs of internal disease, a highly informative presentation, “The Bigger Picture—More than Skin Deep” was given by Valerie D. Callender, MD, FAAD, professor of dermatology at Howard University and medical director of Callender Dermatology and Cosmetic Center in the Washington, DC area, and Andrew F. Alexis, MD, MPH, FAAD, chairman of the department of dermatology at Mount Sinai St. Luke’s and Mount Sinai West, and associate professor of dermatology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and director of the Skin of Color Center at Mount Sinai West in New

York City. This expert team’s enlightening talk covered a wide range of diseases that manifest in the hair, skin, and nails, with a special emphasis on how these symptoms present in patients with skin of color.

Maritza Perez, MD, FAAD, clinical professor of dermatology at Mount Sinai Icahn School of Medicine in New York City, gave an enlightening talk about “Medical Wake-up Calls in People of Color: Truths and Myths,” during which she shared her expertise and research data pertaining to ethnic variations in aging and skin cancer in skin of color. While vigilant sun safety and skin cancer prevention is critical for all ethnic skin of color populations, the data shows a dire need for the Hispanic population in particular to change their mindsets and behaviors by doing self-exams, avoiding tanning, and using sunscreen regularly.

Each presentation was followed by a lively round of Q&A’s, giving our experts the opportunity to delve into the finer points of interest to our wide range of mainstream and dermatology news media guests. SOCS Board of Di-

rectors member Babar Rao, MD, FAAD, and active member Nada Elbuluk, MD, MSc, FAAD, both of whom have presented at previous SOCS Media Days and regularly handle media inquiries for the organization, also supported this media outreach program.

All SOCS media guests received a media kit including the experts’ presentations, along with the Skin of Color Society series of short educational videos, which can be found on the organization’s website: [www.skinofcolorsociety.org](http://www.skinofcolorsociety.org).

### GET INVOLVED

We invite readers of *The Dermatologist* to visit our website, where you will find many useful educational resources and articles covering pertinent skin of color dermatology topics, as well as information about our Skin of Color Society Scientific Symposium, which is held annually in conjunction with American Academy of Dermatology’s Annual Meeting. (This year’s program took place on February 15, 2018, featuring several of the Society’s experts.) You can also find us on Facebook and Twitter (@SkinofColor). We encourage you to connect with us, learn more about our organization, and consider joining us in our mission to make a difference in our fascinating field. ■

*Dr Desai is president of the Skin of Color Society and founder/medical director at Innovative Dermatology in Dallas, TX.*

## CALL FOR VOICES GUEST COMMENTARY SUBMISSIONS

If you have a guest commentary (750 to 1400 words) you would like to submit to the Voices section, send the electronic file and a headshot photo of yourself to:

*The Dermatologist*  
 Dermeditor@hmpcommunications.com  
 If you have questions, e-mail or call  
 800-237-7285 x243.