



Seemal R. Desai, MD, FAAD

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## SKIN OF COLOR SOCIETY

A desire to better serve patients of all skin types is fueling impressive growth at the Skin of Color Society.

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Skin typing is an important concern for aesthetic practitioners. For years, questions lingered regarding the use of injectables in patients at risk of keloid scarring, and it was only through independent research that these fears were largely laid to rest. Providers also need to look carefully at their settings when treating individuals with darker skin types with laser or energy-based devices due to an increased risk of burning and postprocedure pigmentation problems.

These are just some of the reasons why Susan C. Taylor, MD, founded the Skin of Color Society in 2004. What began as a small group of dermatologists dedicated to understanding skin disease in skin of color has blossomed to nearly 450 members in 33 countries. Its membership has doubled in the past year alone.

"One of my goals has been to increase our international outreach efforts, in addition to making the society a trusted source for medical professionals and the media for anything skin-related in darker skin type patients," says Seemal R. Desai, MD, current president of the Skin of Color Society.

In the past two years, he has helped launch several initiatives designed to better serve the dermatology and aesthetic markets as they seek education and training on how to better serve the growing number of skin of color patients.

"Our overarching mission is to educate healthcare providers and the public on skin health issues in skin of color," he says. "And those efforts have grown substantially from an annual scientific symposium to new partnerships with medical societies, such as the Photomedicine Society, mentoring programs and international networking sessions."

The society offers an annual research grant of up to \$15,000 funded, in part, by Ortho Dermatologics. Since 2016, Dr. Desai has been traveling to international conferences, including the International Pigmentary Disorders Conference in New Delhi, the Five Continental Congress in Barcelona and the AnEW conference in Singapore, to offer scientific sessions on skin of color.

"This year, we are planning an event at the South African Dermatology Society Congress and launching a new initiative of regional meetings in approximately 10 to 12 medium- and large-size cities around the country for members to hold discussions and take part in scientific sessions," he says.

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In addition to supporting a better understanding of skin disease in skin of color, the society also has a strong focus on the aesthetics arena. "We are very involved in aesthetics, looking especially at safety outcomes and procedural typing for patients with skin of color," says Dr. Desai.

Membership is open to all specialties, but only board certified dermatologists can become fellows. "Physicians from other specialties can join as affiliate members and attend all events," says Dr. Desai.

To learn more, visit [skinofcolorsociety.org](http://skinofcolorsociety.org). **ME**

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**Inga Hansen** is the executive editor of *MedEsthetics*.