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PII: S0190-9622(20)30476-X

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaad.2020.03.054>

Reference: YMJD 14364

To appear in: *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*

Received Date: 20 March 2020

Accepted Date: 21 March 2020

Please cite this article as: Tull RZ, Kerby E, Subash JJ, McMichael AJ, Ethnic skin centers in the United States: Where are we in 2020?, *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology* (2020), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaad.2020.03.054>.

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Ethnic skin centers in the United States: Where are we in 2020?

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Word Count: 490

References: 3

Tables: 1

Funding Sources: None

Conflicts of Interest: The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

This material has not been presented prior to submission.

Keywords: skin of color, ethnic skin, diversity, residency education, skin of color society

By 2044, people of color, representing Fitzpatrick's Skin Phototypes IV through VI, will comprise over half the United States population.<sup>1,2</sup> This demographic shift demonstrates the need for dermatologists with skin of color expertise. Recognizing unmet needs of ethnic patients, Susan Taylor, M.D., and others, founded the inceptive Skin of Color Center at Mount Sinai St. Luke's in 1999. Over the past 20 years, sixteen academic Ethnic Skin Centers have been established in the United States to (1) further care and research of conditions common among persons of color; (2) prepare residents to treat skin of color; and (3) educate the medical community and public (Chart 1). We conducted a 13-item questionnaire sent to institutions with formal Ethnic Skin Centers in the United States.

Ethnic Skin Centers average 2.3 faculty (range: 1 to 5) and 19 dermatology residents (range: 9-31). A previous study showed 47.6% of residents receive no formal skin of color education, demonstrating need for increased training during residency.<sup>3</sup> Centers in majority minority metropolises support resident training through diverse, high-volume clinics. Some centers offer disease-specific expertise: Henry Ford Ethnic Skin Care is globally recognized for vitiligo. To enhance skin of color education at institutions lacking ethnic skin exposure, faculty from Ethnic Skin Centers accept visiting professorships.

Given the paucity of controlled studies on conditions prevalent in skin of color, research is paramount. Over one-third (7/16) of Ethnic Skin Centers receive institutional, grant and/or industry support. Hampton University Skin of Color Research Institute, a non-clinical entity founded by Valerie Harvey, M.D. and David McDaniel M.D., investigates keloid scar pathogenesis and melanoma disparities. Johns Hopkins Ethnic Skin Program performs clinical

trials assessing novel laser therapies for keloid scars and central centrifugal cicatricial alopecia (CCCA). The Skin of Color Center at Mt. Sinai St. Luke's researches safe cosmetic procedures for darker skin, an area of growing demand. Advocacy and education are also imperative, as evidenced by Massachusetts General Hospital Pigmentary Disorder and Multi-Ethnic Skin Clinic publicizing the dangers of intravenous glutathione skin lightning via local news media. Several centers organize seminars at churches and hair salons to raise awareness for CCCA and traction alopecia while teaching healthy skincare practices.

The Skin of Color Society (SOCS), established in 2004, drives this movement by promoting awareness, furthering research, and providing education to 592 Fellows, Associate Members, Residents, and Research Fellows through grants, mentorship and industry partnerships. Other supporting organizations include the American Academy of Dermatology Diversity Task Force and National Medical Association Dermatology Section. We recognize pioneers, including the Department of Dermatology at Howard University and others, as initial, exclusive sources of dermatologic care and research for marginalized minority communities. We must also acknowledge departments without established centers, contributing to this work.

Ethnic Skin Centers have made significant strides. Nonetheless, centers must continue practicing culturally sensitive patient care, educating the medical community and public, and performing innovative, collaborative research to effectuate advancement in knowledge and treatment of conditions prevalent in skin of color.

### Abbreviations and Acronyms

CCCA; Central Centrifugal Cicatricial Alopecia

SOCS; Skin of Color Society

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Table 1. Ethnic Skin Centers in the United States. AKN, Acne Keloidas Nuchae; CCSA, Central Centrifugal Scarring Alopecia; SOC, Skin of Color; SOCS, Skin of Color Society; NIH, National Institutes of Health; MKTP, Melanocyte-Keratinocyte Transplantation Procedure;

Institution	Location	Date Established	Number of Faculty	Funding	Research
Skin of Color Center at Mount Sinai St. Luke's	New York, NY	1999	6	None	Acne in SOC, CCSA, Laser Resurfacing in SOC, Keloids, Pseudofolliculitis barbae, SOC in Psoriasis Clinical Trials
University of Miami Ethnic Skin Division	Miami, FL	2002	3	None	Alopecia, Pigmentary disorders, Skin Cancer in Ethnic Minorities, Skin of Color in Cosmetic Clinical Trials
Henry Ford Multicultural Dermatology	Detroit, MI	2003	5	Community Giving, Dermatology Department, Institution, Private Donation	AKN, Nd:YAG Laser for Hidradenitis Suppurativa, MKTP for Vitiligo, Skin Cancer in Ethnic Minorities
Northwestern University Center for Ethnic Skin	Chicago, IL	2005	2	Grant Funding	Keloids, Vitiligo and the Microbiome, NIH All of Us Program, Scarring Alopecia Registry
Hampton University Skin of Color Research Institute	Hampton, VA	2009	2	Hampton University, United States Department of Education	Cutaneous Melanoma Disparities, Hidradenitis Suppurativa, Keloid pathogenesis

John Hopkins Ethnic Skin Program	Baltimore, MA	2010	3	Dermatology Department, Industry, SOCS, Dermatology Foundation	AKN, Laser therapy for CCSA, Hidradenitis Suppurativa, Keloids, Mycosis fungoides, Vitiligo
Boston University Center for Ethnic Skin	Boston, MA	2012	3	Dermatology Department	Melasma/ Hyperpigmentation
Brigham and Women's Hospital Multicultural Dermatology Program	Boston, MA	2013	3	None	None
Ethnic Skin Care Clinic at University of Iowa	Iowa City, IA	2015	1	Dermatology Department	None
Massachusetts General Hospital Pigmentary Disorder and Multi-Ethnic Skin Clinic	Boston, MA	2015	2	None	None
University of California, David Health Center for Multicultural Dermatology and Hair Health	Sacramento, CA	2015	1	None	Cicatricial Alopecia Clinical Trials, Hidradenitis Suppurativa Clinical Trials



University of Southern California Skin of Color Center and Pigmentary Disorders Clinic	Los Angeles, CA	2018	1	None	Pigmentary Disorders, Vitiligo
University of Alabama Skin of Color	Birmingham, AL	2019	1	None	CCSA, Hidradenitis Suppurativa
Weill Cornell Dermatology Center for Diverse Skin Complexions	New York, NY	2019	1	None	Keloids
Washington at St Louis Skin of Color and Inflammatory Dermatoses Clinic	St. Louis, MO	2019	1	Dermatology Department, Institution	Hidradenitis Suppurativa, Sarcoidosis, Vitiligo, Lichenoid Dermatoses