EDITOR’S MESSAGE

Climate Effects that are Far Reaching

In this issue of Journal of Dermatology for Physician Assistants (JDPA), Annika Belzer, BS, and Misha Rosenbach, MD, discuss the implications our planet warming has on our clinical practice of dermatology. At first glance these two subjects may seem unrelated but, as 2020 and 2021 have taught us, our society is interconnected; this is also the case with climate and skin disease.

Increased precipitation and warming trends are causing endemic infections, specifically mycoses, to spread outside of traditionally designated geographic locations.1 I have seen this in my organ transplant patients and in those patients on treatment for multiple sclerosis getting cutaneous fungal infections without a history of travel to an endemic area. The redrawing of these now antiquated maps for endemic mycoses is an effect of climate change.2

This article also discusses how extreme weather events like hurricanes or heavy precipitation bringing flooding can result in atypical soft tissues infections for first responders or victims that come in contact with contaminated waters. Practicing in a noncoastal region does not preclude you from treating these conditions. First responders often travel to provide mutual aid in these coastal disasters or storm victims may be displaced to your area of clinical practice.

Our clinical practice is ever-evolving as knowledge, technology, and treatments advance. As relevant and excellent clinicians, we must remain curious. And as Belzer and Rosenbach highlight, we should be aware of the impact of evolving environmental factors as we care for our patients.

Also in this issue, Peter A. Young, MPAS, PA-C, contemplates the meaning of “diplomacy and fellowship,” and Sara M. Wilchowski, DMSc, PA-C, describes the case of metastatic breast cancer manifesting as alopecia neoplastica, a rare cutaneous manifestation of breast adenocarcinoma with less than 30 reported cases worldwide. This case illustrates the importance of considering alopecia neoplastica as a differential diagnosis in adult women presenting with localized alopecia who also have a history of breast carcinoma.

In Professional Development, Amy Baum Jones, MPAS, PA-C, provides a refresher on statistical terms commonly used by clinicians for data interpretation, such as “null hypothesis,” “p-value,” “confidence interval,” and “relative ratio.” Familiarization with these concepts can help clinicians identify misinterpretation and/or misrepresentation of data when interpreting the reported outcomes of clinical trials as well as determine results that are fair, accurate, and applicable to actual patient care.

With a new year just around the corner, our compliance expert Jaci J. Kipreos, CPC, CPMA, CDEO, CEMC, COC, CPC, examines what is expected for 2023 and looks at updates to 2021 Evaluation and Management documentation guidelines. As Kipreos states, “It is time to get ready and get prepared,” and JDPA’s editorial team strives to provide the tools readers need to do so.

We are pleased to present all abstracts from the Society of Dermatology Physician Assistants (SDPA) 20th Annual Fall Dermatology Conference, which takes place November 17 to 20, 2022, in Miami, Florida. You can access the accompanying posters to these abstracts on our website, JDPA.org.

I look forward to seeing many of you onsite at the conference. If you see me, please say hello. I would love to hear what you think of this issue.

Sincerely,

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