

2026

COLLOQUIUM ON THE

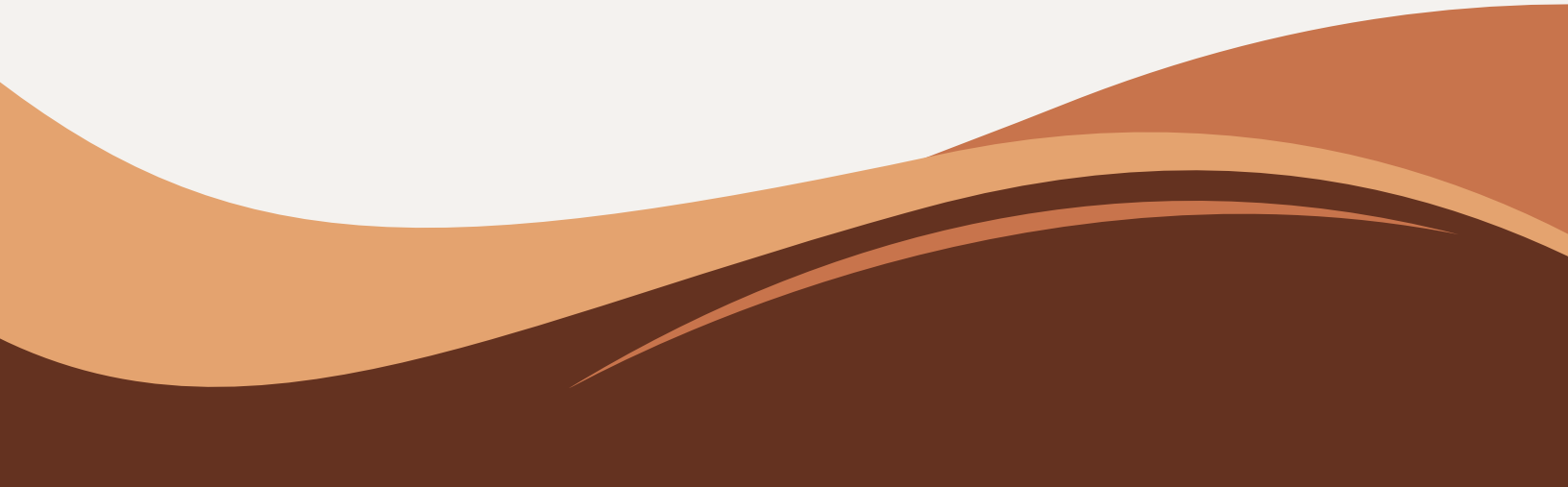
Black Patient

IN DERMATOLOGY

ADVANCE BRIEFING

AUGUST 8, 2026 | 10 A.M. TO 12:30 P.M. | VIRTUAL SUMMIT

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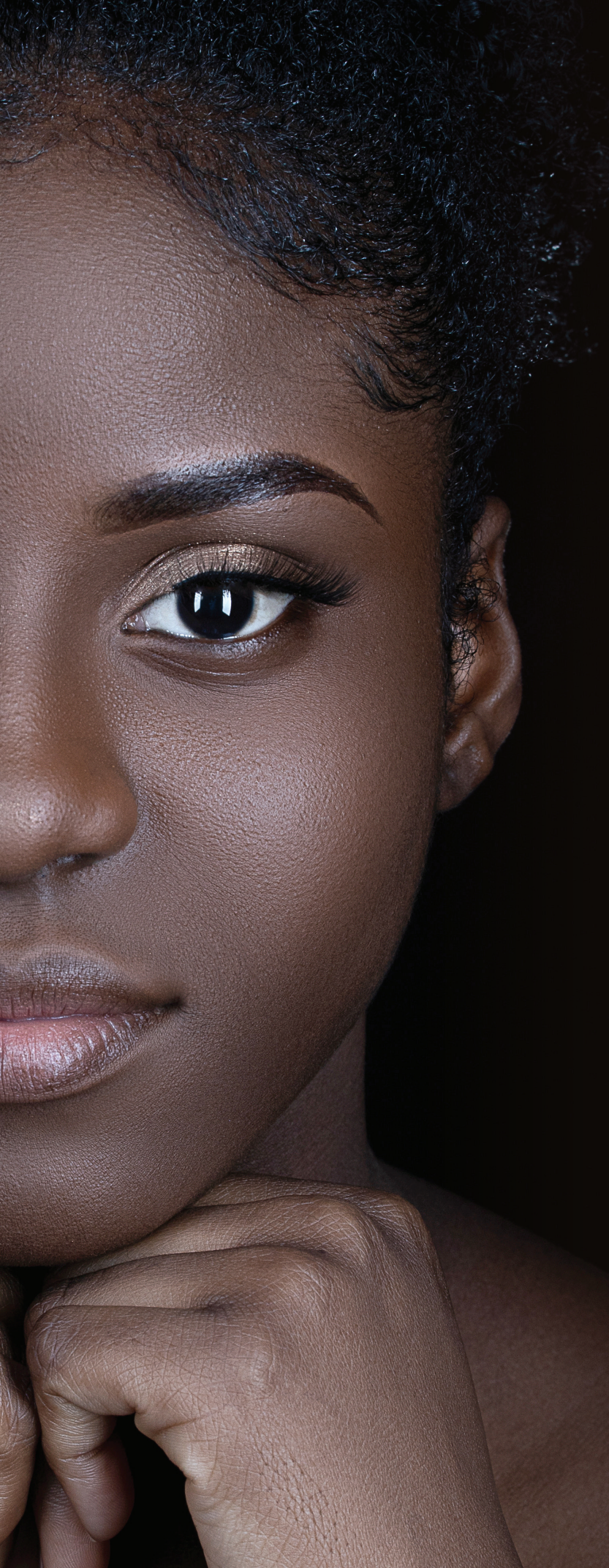
INTRODUCTION

Dermatology, like many medical specialties, has historically centred its research, clinical trials, diagnostic criteria, and treatment protocols around lighter skin tones predominant in White populations. This bias has created significant gaps in the understanding and care of patients with Black skin, including those in Canada. The consequences have been profound, with Black patients often underserved, misdiagnosed, or receiving delayed treatment.

The 5th Colloquium on the Black Patient in Dermatology aims to provide attendees with foundational knowledge on the challenges faced by Black dermatology patients in Canada, how skin diseases manifest differently in this population, examples of historical and ongoing disparities, and recent improvements in research, treatment, and clinical practice relating to Black patients in dermatology.

Dermatology in Canada continues to confront the legacy of research, education, and clinical practice built around lighter skin tones, which has had significant implications for Black patients and other individuals with skin of colour (SOC). This overview reviews key developments relevant to clinicians caring for Black patients and SOC populations in Canada, with a focus on psoriasis, inflammatory dermatoses, and access to equitable, culturally-competent care.





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PERSISTENT UNDERREPRESENTATION AND SYSTEMIC GAPS

Recent Canadian data confirm that dermatology leadership and clinical trials remain disproportionately White, reinforcing structural inequities in how skin conditions are studied and taught. A 2025 cross-sectional survey of Canadian dermatologists in leadership roles published in [BMJ Leader](#) found that roughly two-thirds identified as White/Caucasian, with Fitzpatrick skin types I–II substantially over-represented relative to types III–VI. Most respondents agreed that Black, Indigenous, and other racialized groups are insufficiently represented in leadership and training curricula. Other Canadian analyses show the majority of dermatology clinical trials enrolled less than 1.2% Black participants, limiting the generalizability of efficacy and safety data for this population.

In parallel, Canadian lay media have highlighted the mismatch between population diversity and specialist availability, drawing attention to the fact that fewer than 10 Black dermatologists practice in a country with approximately 1.5 million Black Canadians. This scarcity compounds documented barriers to care, including longer waits to see a dermatologist, lower likelihood of referral, and more frequent misdiagnosis or delayed recognition of inflammatory and pigmentary disorders in Black patients. Together, these structural issues perpetuate a cycle in which SOC conditions are less well understood, less frequently depicted in educational materials, and less consistently treated according to evidence-informed standards. A new chapter in the [Canadian Pharmacists Association's Compendium](#) of Pharmaceuticals and Specialties, titled *Dermatological Considerations in Skin of Colour*, employs images and tips for patient assessment related to the diagnosis and treatment of dermatologic conditions in individuals with skin of colour.



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DISEASE PRESENTATION IN BLACK SKIN AND SOC: ONGOING CLINICAL CHALLENGES

The clinical appearance and course of many dermatoses differ in Black skin compared with lighter phototypes. Erythema is often muted or absent to the unaided eye in darker phototypes, instead manifesting as violaceous, grey, or brown dyschromia, and inflammatory conditions may present with papular, follicular, or lichenified morphology rather than classic erythematous plaques. Atopic dermatitis in Black patients typically involves more severe pruritus, greater involvement of extensor surfaces, follicular accentuation, and prominent post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation. The hyperpigmentation may also be more distressing to patients than the active dermatitis itself.

Psoriasis in Black and SOC patients is frequently characterized by thicker, more hyperkeratotic plaques, intense scaling, less obvious erythema, and high rates of pigmentary sequelae following resolution, including both hyper- and hypopigmentation. These features, combined with low representation in classical atlases, contribute to the need for biopsy for diagnostic confirmation among Black patients, which can delay initiation of appropriate systemic or biologic therapy. Other conditions—including discoid lupus erythematosus, traction alopecia, central centrifugal cicatricial alopecia, pseudofolliculitis barbae, and keloid-forming tendencies—remain disproportionately prevalent in Black populations, demanding high clinical suspicion and nuanced counselling around cosmetic and psychosocial impact.

NEW CANADIAN PSORIASIS CONSENSUS FOR SKIN OF COLOUR

One of the most significant developments in the past 18 months is the publication of a Canadian Delphi consensus specifically addressing the management of psoriasis in patients with skin of colour. Published in [*JAAD International*](#), 16 Canadian dermatologists with expertise in psoriasis and SOC developed 11 statements on SOC terminology, along with primary and secondary recommendations on clinical presentation, differential diagnosis, treatment considerations, and the limitations of existing assessment tools. Additional statements focused on access to care, acknowledging that systemic barriers compound disease burden for SOC patients with psoriasis.

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Clinically, the *JAAD International* consensus paper emphasizes careful assessment of hue and secondary features (induration, scale, surface change) rather than relying on redness as the principal measure of activity, and it recommends integrating pigmentary change into both disease severity assessment and treatment goals. The paper advocates proactive counselling regarding post-inflammatory dyspigmentation, recommending early and adequate control with high-efficacy systemic or biologic therapies to minimize chronic pigmentary sequelae. Importantly, the consensus calls for adaptation of common scoring tools, such as PASI and IGA, to better capture disease burden in darker phototypes, and for ongoing research to validate alternative metrics that incorporate pigmentary and textural endpoints.

EVOLVING EVIDENCE FROM INCLUSIVE PSORIASIS TRIALS

Aligned with calls for more representative research, recent international and North American trials have deliberately increased enrolment of patients with SOC, including those treated at Canadian sites. As one example, the VISIBLE phase 3b randomized study, conducted across 39 centres in the United States and Canada, evaluated guselkumab in 103 adults with moderate-to-severe plaque psoriasis who self-identified as non-White and predominantly had Fitzpatrick phototypes IV–VI. At week 16, guselkumab demonstrated robust efficacy: approximately three-quarters of treated patients achieved IGA 0/1 and more than half achieved PASI 90, with complete clearance rates near one-third and no serious adverse events reported at that time.



By week 48, over 70% of participants in both treatment arms maintained IGA 0/1 and PASI 90, and nearly 50% achieved complete clearance, reinforcing durable benefit and acceptable safety in SOC populations. The trial demonstrated that achieving meaningful diversity in randomized psoriasis studies is feasible, countering long-standing assumptions that low prevalence in SOC populations precludes representative enrolment. For Canadian clinicians, these data support confident use of high-efficacy biologics in Black patients with psoriasis, while highlighting the need for continued pharmacovigilance and real-world data collection in diverse populations.



DERMATOLOGY

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SKIN SPECTRUM SUMMIT 2026

Learn more

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ADVANCES IN CANADIAN EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SKIN OF COLOUR

Educational reform has emerged as a central strategy to improve care for Black patients and SOC populations, with several notable Canadian initiatives in the past year.

Canadian dermatologists have continued to expand visual resources and guidance for pharmacists and other front-line providers, emphasizing diverse photographic depictions and practical assessment tips. A new image bank focusing on skin issues in SOC patients, called [SkinImages.ca](https://www.skinimages.ca), is in beta development and will be launched in the fourth quarter of 2026. These materials aim to correct historical underrepresentation of darker skin tones in clinical references and to help non-dermatologists recognize atypical presentations in SOC patients.

At the postgraduate level, a 2025 national overview of Canadian dermatology training documented progress and persistent gaps in SOC representation and diversity. The review highlighted growing availability of dedicated curriculum content on SOC, increasing inclusion of diverse images in teaching, and more frequent discussion of equity, diversity and inclusion in residency programs. However, Canadian dermatologists active in leadership roles still reported that conditions in SOC remain underrepresented in formal curricula and that further efforts are needed to ensure trainees are routinely exposed to a broad spectrum of skin tones and cultural contexts. Concurrently, major philanthropic investment—such as the establishment of a Chair in Ethnodermatology at the University of Toronto with dedicated funding for inclusive dermatology—signals a long-term institutional commitment to advancing SOC research and training in Canada.

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PUBLIC AWARENESS AND PATIENT ADVOCACY

Canadian professional societies and media have increasingly framed dermatologic disparities affecting Black patients and SOC populations as a public health issue requiring structural solutions. Campaigns such as “Canada as a Leader in Dermatology for Skin of Colour” and video resources produced by the Canadian Dermatology Association urge clinicians to incorporate SOC content into teaching, to remain “naturally curious” about new therapeutics, and to intentionally include diverse skin types in both care and education. Lay press stories—often featuring Canadian dermatologists who specialize in SOC—have drawn public attention to the consequences of delayed diagnosis and misdiagnosis, emphasizing that these outcomes are rooted in systemic educational and workforce gaps rather than individual patient behaviours.

These communications reinforce the importance of encouraging Black patients and those with SOC to advocate for themselves in clinical encounters, to present organized histories of their concerns, and to expect equitable access to advanced therapies. At the same time, they challenge clinicians to recognize implicit biases and to assess whether their own practices reflect inclusive standards—such as routinely documenting Fitzpatrick type, including diverse images in patient education materials, and participating in local or national initiatives focused on SOC dermatology.



COLLOQUIUM FACULTY

DR. ANDREW F. ALEXIS

COLLOQUIUM CHAIR



Andrew F. Alexis, MD, MPH is Professor of Clinical Dermatology and Vice-Chair for Diversity and Inclusion at Weill Cornell Medicine in New York City. He is the former Chair of the Department of Dermatology at Mount Sinai Morningside and Mount Sinai West. Having served as Director of the first-of-its-kind Skin of Color Center for over 15 years, his work has helped to advance patient care, research, and education pertaining to dermatologic disorders that are prevalent in populations with skin of color.

Dr. Alexis received his medical degree from Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians & Surgeons and his Master of Public Health at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. He completed his dermatology residency at Weill Cornell Medicine, followed by a fellowship in dermatopharmacology at NYU Langone's Ronald O. Perelman Department of Dermatology.

Dr. Alexis has published more than 100 articles in peer-reviewed journals including the *British Journal of Dermatology*, *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*, and *JAMA Dermatology* among others. He has co-edited four textbooks and authored over 10 book chapters.

Dr. Alexis is a frequent lecturer at national and international conferences and has been invited as a Visiting Professor or Grand Rounds speaker at many prestigious academic institutions.

Dr. Alexis has held numerous leadership positions in professional organizations; he is the Immediate Past President of the Skin of Color Society, Past President of the New York Dermatological Society, Past President of the New York Academy of Medicine Dermatology Section, and former Chair of the Diversity Task Force Committee of the American Academy of Dermatology. He currently serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the Scarring Alopecia Foundation and was recently elected to the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Dermatology.

Dr. Alexis has appeared on ABC, CBS, NBC, and FOX television news programs and has been quoted in numerous leading publications, including the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Forbes*, *Vogue*, *Allure*, and *Essence*. He is listed in Castle Connolly's Top Doctors™ and Super Doctors®.

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DR. RACHEL NETAHE ASINIWASIS

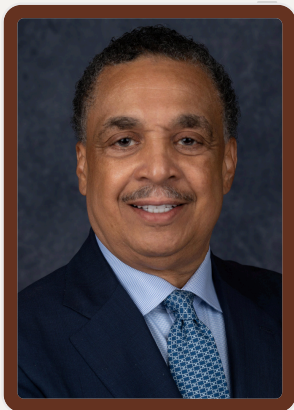
PRESENTER



Dr. Rachel Netahe Asiniwasis is a dermatologist currently practicing in her hometown of Regina. She is the founder of Origins Dermatology Centre that serves the general population, alongside a multidisciplinary team-based model that delivers in-person and teledermatology services inclusive of rural and Indigenous communities across the province. Dr. Asiniwasis has a Master of Science in Health Sciences in clinical and translational research. She is of Plains Cree, Saulteaux, and English heritage. Her areas of interest include medical dermatology, inflammatory skin disease, the skin barrier, medical education, translational research, clinical trials, access to therapeutics, patient advocacy, skin of color, and rural, underserved, and Indigenous dermatology.

DR. ELIOT F. BATTLE, JR.

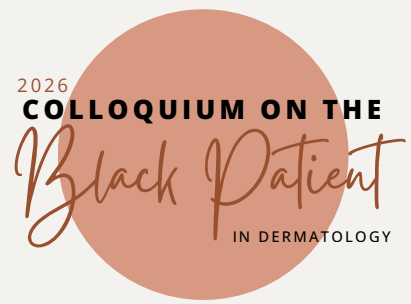
PRESENTER, DR. MERCY ALEXIS KEYNOTE



Dr. Eliot F. Battle, Jr. is the CEO and Co-Founder of Cultura Dermatology & Plastic Surgery in Washington, D.C. Under his leadership, the practice has become a premier destination for patients from around the world seeking advanced dermatologic and aesthetic care, as well as for physicians pursuing specialized training in laser and aesthetic medicine.

An internationally recognized educator, Dr. Battle has personally trained more than 4,000 physicians worldwide in laser surgical techniques. Throughout his career, he has maintained a strong commitment to mentorship, welcoming practicing physicians, residents, and medical students to observe and learn at his center. His dedication to education has helped shape the next generation of leaders in aesthetic dermatology.

Dr. Battle is a renowned dermatologist, researcher, and pioneer in the field of laser medicine for skin of color. During his tenure at the Wellman Center for Photomedicine at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, he conducted groundbreaking research alongside Dr. R. Rox Anderson that transformed the treatment of diverse skin types. His work led to significant advances in laser applications for hair removal, pigmented lesions, and vascular anomalies in patients with skin of color.



COLLOQUIUM FACULTY

Among his most influential contributions was the development of so-called “color-blind” laser technology—innovations that made it possible to safely and effectively treat darker skin types (Fitzpatrick IV–VI), overcoming limitations of earlier laser systems that frequently caused complications in darker skin tones. These advances helped establish new standards of care in dermatology and laser surgery worldwide. Dr. Battle’s contributions to medicine have earned him numerous academic honors and awards. He is a member of the prestigious Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society and was the recipient of a National Institutes of Health Investigator Research Award. He has also been honored with the Innovations in Skin of Color Dermatology Award, and has served as Co-Chair of the Skin of Color Update Conference for more than 16 years, helping to advance education and research in this critical area of dermatology.

A respected leader within organized medicine, Dr. Battle is a member of the American Academy of Dermatology, the American Society for Laser Medicine and Surgery, and numerous international professional societies. He is a Past Chairman of the Dermatology Section of the National Medical Association and a Past President of the Howard University Medical Alumni Association.

In addition to his medical achievements, Dr. Battle and Cultura Dermatology & Plastic Surgery have received numerous business and community honors, including the Emerging Business of the Year Award and the Business Leader Award, recognizing their impact on healthcare innovation, education, and patient care.

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DR. RENÉE BEACH

PRESENTER



Dr. Renée A. Beach is a dermatologist practicing medical and cosmetic dermatology in Toronto. She opened DermAtelier on Avenue in the Avenue-Lawrence area of the city in 2020. She enjoys treating a range of skin conditions and the therapeutic challenge that comes with treating the same condition effectively in different skin types. In addition to her dermatology practice, Dr. Beach collaborates in select research projects, teaches dermatology residents during various academic days, and highlights the expertise of the profession as the on-air dermatologist on the daytime talk show "The Social", as well as during other media appearances.

DR. MARISSA JOSEPH

PRESENTER

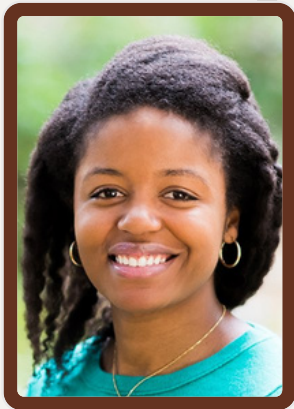


Dr. Marissa Joseph is an Associate Professor and the Inaugural AbbVie Chair in Ethnodermatology at the University of Toronto. She is Medical Director of the Ricky Kanee Schachter Dermatology Centre at Women's College Hospital, and a Staff Physician in Dermatology at The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids), where she cares for children with complex skin disease and leads a pediatric laser program. She is double board-certified in Pediatrics and Dermatology and completed medical school at Dalhousie University, both pediatric and dermatology training at the University of Toronto, and an MSc in Community Health at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health.

Her practice spans general adult, pediatric, and surgical dermatology. Clinically and academically, she focuses on inflammatory skin disorders (including psoriasis, atopic dermatitis, and hidradenitis suppurativa), genodermatoses, and equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in dermatologic care. Dr. Joseph serves as the EDI Lead for the Division of Dermatology at the University of Toronto, chairs the Canadian Skin of Colour & Diversity Research Scholarship, and co-chairs SKIN Canada's Skin of Color Research Working Group. She has authored book chapters and numerous peer-reviewed articles and is recognized internationally for her expertise. Her vision for the field is straightforward: equitable, high-quality dermatologic care for everyone.

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DR. JENNA LESTER PRESENTER



Dr. Jenna Lester is a graduate of Harvard University and The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. She completed residency training in dermatology at the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) and is board certified in dermatology.

Dr. Lester is an Assistant Professor of Dermatology at UCSF, where she practices and teaches general dermatology, and is the Founding Director of the Skin of Color Program. She has a particular interest in health care disparities in dermatology and improving access to specialty care for all patients. She was recently named a TED Fellow, where she continues her work to promote equity in dermatology education.

DR. JAGGI RAO PRESENTER



Dr. Jaggi Rao is an award-winning dermatologist, author, innovator, and researcher, licensed in both Canada and the United States. He is also a certified cosmetic and laser surgeon, having completed an accredited fellowship in southern California. Dr. Rao has a very busy and popular practice in the heart of Edmonton, where he serves as a Clinical Professor of Medicine and is the Dermatology Residency Program Director at the University of Alberta. He is also a resource for industry, delivering dozens of lectures every year at local, national, and international meetings, while serving on speakers' bureaus, research committees, and advisory boards.

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DR. IRINA TURCHIN PRESENTER



Dr. Irina Turchin is the Medical Director of the Brunswick Dermatology Center in Fredericton, N.B., where she combines patient care with clinical research. She has been a primary investigator for over 80 Phase I-IV clinical trials covering many autoimmune and inflammatory skin diseases, including vitiligo, and has co-authored more than 60 peer-reviewed publications.

Dr. Turchin is an Assistant Professor at Dalhousie University and is actively involved in medical education nationally and internationally. She has served on the steering committee for numerous educational initiatives and industry-led CME events.

She earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Alberta, completed her medical training at the University of Calgary, and her Dermatology residency at McGill University. Dr. Turchin is board certified in dermatology in both Canada and the United States and has served as a board member for the Canadian Dermatology Association and the Canadian Dermatology Foundation.

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AGENDA | AUGUST 8, 2026

START TIME (ET)	TOPIC	DURATION	FACULTY
10:00 AM	WELCOME & LEARNING OBJECTIVES	5 MIN	DR. ANDREW ALEXIS
10:05	DR. MERCY ALEXIS KEYNOTE LECTURE: BEYOND SKIN COLOR: PRECISION LASER MEDICINE BEGINS WITH BIOLOGY <i>SUPPORTED BY: L'ORÉAL DERMATOLOGICAL BEAUTY</i>	20 MIN	DR. ELIOT F. BATTLE
10:25	DERMATOLOGIC DISORDERS IN BLACK SKIN: NUANCES, CHALLENGES, AND ADVANCES IN MANAGEMENT	15 MIN	DR. ANDREW ALEXIS
10:40	TREATMENT OF MELASMA AND HYPERPIGMENTATION	15 MIN	DR. JAGGI RAO
11:00	DO NO HARM: PROCEDURAL DERMATOLOGY TIPS THAT PROTECT PIGMENTED SKIN	15 MIN	DR. RENÉE BEACH
11:15	LIVE PANEL DISCUSSION	15 MIN	
11:25	VITILIGO: CANADIAN CONSENSUS GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT	15 MIN	DR. IRINA TURCHIN
11:40	PEDIATRIC DERMATOLOGY: PIGMENTARY DISORDERS	15 MIN	DR. MARISSA JOSEPH
11:55	BIO BREAK	5 MIN	
12:00	THE LIMITATIONS OF AI USE IN DERMATOLOGY FOR BLACK PATIENTS	15 MIN	DR. JENNA LESTER
12:15	THE ROLE OF MENTORSHIP IN DERMATOLOGY	15 MIN	DR. RACHEL ASINIWASIS
12:30	LIVE PANEL DISCUSSION	15 MIN	
12:45	CONCLUSION	5 MIN	DR. ANDREW ALEXIS

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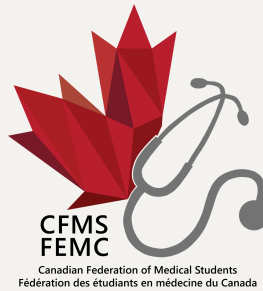
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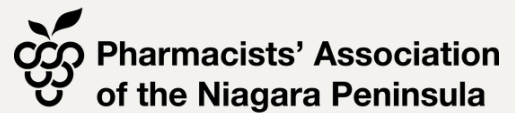
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