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### Title

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### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7qx1s16m>

### Journal

Archives of Dermatological Research, 315(5)

### ISSN

0340-3696

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### Publication Date

2023-07-01

### DOI

10.1007/s00403-022-02489-y

Peer reviewed



# The Association of Academic Cosmetic Dermatology: improving cosmetic dermatology education through collaboration, research, and advocacy

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Received: 10 July 2022 / Revised: 10 July 2022 / Accepted: 18 November 2022  
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## Abstract

Cosmetic and laser procedures are increasingly popular among patients and are skills in which dermatologists are regarded as well trained. Most dermatology residents intend to incorporate cosmetic procedures into their practice and prefer to learn such procedures during residency through direct patient care. However, there are notable challenges in optimizing how residents are trained in cosmetic and laser dermatology. To address these barriers and elevate the practice of cosmetic dermatology in academic medicine, the Association of Academic Cosmetic Dermatology (AACD) was founded in 2021 as the lead professional society for dermatologists who direct the education of resident trainees in cosmetic and laser dermatology. The AACD, a group of board-certified dermatologists who teach cosmetic and laser dermatology to residents, aims to improve cosmetic dermatology education through collaboration, research, and advocacy.

**Keywords** Needs · Initiative · Academic · Cosmetic · Dermatology · Proceeding

Cosmetic and laser procedures are growing in popularity among patients and require skills in which dermatologists are well trained. Over 10.3 million cosmetic and laser procedures were performed by dermatologic surgeons in 2019, a 14% increase compared to 2018 [1]. Over three-quarters of dermatology residents plan to incorporate cosmetics into their practice, and the preferred method for learning such procedures is direct patient care; yet, resident experience

with hands-on training varies widely from program to program. [2–4]

The Association of Academic Cosmetic Dermatology (AACD) was founded in 2021 to address gaps in cosmetic dermatology education as the lead professional medical society for dermatologists who direct the education of resident trainees in cosmetic and laser dermatology. Specifically, AACD members are board-certified dermatologists who teach cosmetic and laser dermatology as faculty at a US Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)-accredited or Canadian Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPS)-accredited dermatology residency program.

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**Table 1** Aims of the Association of Academic Cosmetic Dermatology (AACD)

1. Provide educational training for resident dermatologists
  - a. Encourage resident engagement
  - b. Improved access to injectables and lasers
  - c. Improved training opportunities with appropriate feedback
  - d. Protected faculty time and faculty involvement
  - e. Practice and quality improvement initiatives
2. Undertake scientific research into cosmetic dermatology
  - a. Multi center database for collection of routine data
  - b. Multi center cohort studies
  - c. Multi center randomized controlled trials
  - d. Guidelines of care for cosmetic and laser dermatology
  - e. Publish the findings of such research for the general public's benefit
3. Develop guidelines of care for cosmetic and laser dermatology
  - a. Describe the role of laser and procedural dermatology in treating the sequelae of complex medical dermatology conditions
4. Collaborate with other relevant dermatology societies
  - a. Close collaboration with the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery, including cosmetic fellowship training program
  - b. Collaboration with the Dermatologic Surgery section of the Association of Professors of Dermatology

**Table 2** Initial committees of the Association of Academic Cosmetic Dermatology (AACD), and specific objective(s) of each committee

Committee	Objective(s)
Regulatory	Facilitate compliance with local Graduate Medical Education (GME) and Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)
Research	Identify research questions and facilitate collaborative research
Nominating	Recommend new Board members, committee Chairs, and committee members
Membership	Encourage all academic cosmetic dermatologists to join, and ensure members see value in participating
Scientific Assembly	Plan scientific and social programs for the annual meeting
Resident Education	Develop procedures and policies to improve trainee cosmetic education
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Ensure that the society has broad representation and that cosmetic services are broadly available
Patient Experience	Optimize the in-clinic experience of the cosmetic patient, including delivery of high-quality care
Advocacy	Improve access to cosmetic and laser procedures
Cosmetic Mentorship	Facilitate mentorship of junior faculty and trainees interested in cosmetic dermatology
Finance	Oversee fundraising, budgeting, and audits
Award	Distribute awards for outstanding achievements within cosmetic dermatology

The aims of this society are to (1) provide educational training for resident dermatologists; (2) undertake scientific research into cosmetic dermatology; (3) develop guidelines of care for cosmetic and laser dermatology; and (4) collaborate with other relevant dermatology societies, including the ASDS. Table 1 details the specific society aims.

The AACD is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of 14 members and six Executive Officers. At least 12 committees will help identify needs and implement appropriate initiatives to address these needs. Table 2 presents the initial committees and their objectives.

Forming the AACD acknowledges cosmetic dermatology as a mature discipline and primary dermatologic subspecialty taught across the United States and internationally. This association aspires to create a congenial and productive

space in which academicians and teachers of cosmetic dermatology can work together to improve and optimize trainee education and patient care.

**Author contributions** All authors conceptualized the manuscript. MA, KM, and BYK drafted the manuscript. All authors reviewed and edited the manuscript for important intellectual content.

**Funding** None.

**Availability of data and material** Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study.

**Code availability** Not applicable.

## Declarations

**Conflict of interest** Murad Alam is Editor-in-Chief of *Archives of Dermatological Research*. Anna Bar is a consultant for Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc. Travis Blalock is a principal investigator for Castle Biosciences LLC. Diana Bolotin is a principal investigator for Replimune Group Inc. M. Laurin Council has been a consultant for AbbVie/Allergan Aesthetics, Sanofi-Genzyme/Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc, and Castle Biosciences LLC. Shraddha Desai receives honoraria from Alma Lasers and is a consultant for Level Ex Inc. Deirdre Hooper has served on the advisory board for Allergan Aesthetics, Castle Biosciences LLC, Crown Laboratories Inc, Vichy Laboratories, DermTech, Endo Aesthetics LLC, Evolus Inc, and Revision Skincare; as a consultant for Allergan Aesthetics, Galderma SA, and Mayne Pharma Group Limited; and as an investigator for Allergan Aesthetics, Endo Aesthetics LLD, and Galderma SA. Deirdre Hooper has ownership interest with CollPlant Biotechnologies Ltd and Supergoop LLC; has received honoraria from Allergan Aesthetics and Galderma SA; and is an active clinical trial investigator for Arcutis Biotherapeutics, Cara, Dermavant Sciences Inc, Endo International plc, Galderma SA, Incyte Corporation, Taro Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd, UCB SA, Menlo Therapeutics (VYNE Therapeutics), Novan Inc, Bellus Medical, Brickell Biotech Inc, Asana Biosciences, Sun Pharmaceuticals Inc, AnaptysBio Inc, Affibody AB, BioPharmX Inc, Sol-Gel Technologies Ltd, Kiniksa Pharmaceuticals. Jenny Hu is a consultant for Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc. Jayne Joo is a stockholder of Revance Therapeutics. Kristen Kelly is a consultant for Shanghai Fudan-Zhangjiang Bio-pharmaceutical Co., Ltd, Syneron/Candela Medical, Sciton Inc, and IQVIA Inc; has received research grants from BioPhotus Inc and OrLucent Inc; has had research supported by Allergan Aesthetics, the American Society for Laser Medicine and Surgery (ASLMS), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Sturge Weber Foundation, and University of California Irvine Institute for Clinical and Translational Science (ICTS); and equipment has been provided to the Department of Dermatology at University of California Irvine by Solta Medical;

Syneron/Candela Medical; ThermiGen LLC; Michelson Diagnostics Ltd, and Sciton Inc. Edit Olasz Harken is co-founder of Harken Derm skin care. Melissa Shive served as a consultant for IQVIA Inc. Amanda Suggs is a medical advisor for Skinintelligent, and a medical consultant and advisor for MaryKay. Neelam Vashi is a consultant for Procter & Gamble, Janssen Pharmaceuticals Inc, and Pfizer Inc. Mara Weinstein Velez has been an investigator for Solta Medical Inc and ALASTIN Skincare Inc, and has received honoraria from ALASTIN Skincare Inc, Cynosure LLC, and SofWave Medical Ltd.

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**Publisher's Note** Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

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