

## INTRODUCTION

The first Skin Disease Education Foundation (SDEF) Psoriasis Forum in 2004 focused on the new therapeutic opportunities offered by the relatively new biologic agents—at that time, tumor necrosis factor (TNF) inhibitors. Over the subsequent decade, the scope of the program has grown, now covering all aspects of the diagnosis and treatment of psoriasis. The expanding scope reflects an unmet need for ongoing professional education as the management of this disease continues to increase in complexity.

This continuing medical education supplement to *Seminars in Cutaneous Medicine and Surgery* is based on presentations from the SDEF 10th Annual Psoriasis Forum. It provides a comprehensive overview of the information covered at that conference.

The first article features a brief overview of the science of psoriasis as it pertains to the current understanding of pathophysiologic pathways. This information has important implications for appreciating how and why newer and emerging therapeutic agents work in managing various manifestations of psoriasis.

An article on topical therapy reviews the appropriate uses of traditional topicals as well as the newer agents currently being investigated. Topical therapy remains the most widely used strategy, and, for most patients with mild to moderate psoriasis and limited body surface area affected, it is highly effective.

In patients with moderate to severe disease in whom topical therapy is not adequate, an expanded roster of systemic treatments is available now; in addition, other treatments are well

along in development or show promise in early clinical trials. The article on methotrexate and cyclosporine underscores the point that these medications still have an important place in the list of options. Some patients do well with methotrexate monotherapy, and this medication also enhances the efficacy of many biologic agents. Cyclosporine has taken its place as a valuable rescue medication that can be extremely effective and, with short-term use, is safe in selected patients.

The introduction of the biologic agents was a benchmark in psoriasis treatment, virtually eliminating the need to hospitalize patients with moderate to severe psoriasis. Two articles focus on these medications: one provides an update on the TNF inhibitors, and the other addresses newer and emerging therapies that target new pathophysiologic pathways, including interleukin (IL)-12/23 and IL-17.

The final article addresses some of the special needs of children, women, and elderly patients with psoriasis.

In addition to the articles in this supplement, readers are invited to access selected presentations from the Forum. These are available online at <http://tinyurl.com/sdef10thpsoriasisforum>.

Over the past decade, what was once a relatively small view of psoriasis pathophysiology and treatment has expanded to become a panorama, with the vista changing rapidly from year to year, sometimes month to month. As a result, clinicians find it increasingly challenging to keep their knowledge base current. The faculty hopes that this supplement will assist readers in meeting that challenge.

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