

Murdough Family Center for Psoriasis Progress Report April 2007

We would like to take this opportunity to update you on the progress of the Murdough Family Center for Psoriasis.

Investigation of Best Practices

The first activity of the Center was for us to investigate the best practices for psoriasis. We visited centers in Salt Lake City, Denver, New York, Dallas, and Manchester, England that we identified as institutions with special efforts in psoriasis clinical practice or research. From these visits, we have formulated our plans to develop the top research center for psoriasis in the world. The approach that we have taken is to divide the Center into two components, a clinical and research component. Kevin will serve as the overall Director of the Center, Neil will serve as the Clinical Director and Tom will serve as the Research Director.

Research

We have made major strides setting the research agenda for the Center when we recently submitted a 700 page, \$6 million proposal to the National Institutes of Health. This grant, if awarded, would fund a Center of Research Translation whose focus is psoriasis and consists of four distinct projects which include both clinical trials and basic science research with a significant focus on the cardiovascular risks associated with psoriasis. This is a very timely area of investigation that will serve as a critical area of focus for the Center. In fact, we have just purchased an ultrasound machine that will allow us to perform non-invasive vascular studies in our patients with psoriasis to evaluate the cardiovascular risks of psoriasis in a prospective fashion. The structure and deadline of this research proposal created a highly focused creative collaboration between dermatologic, cardiovascular, psychiatric, immunologic, and neurovascular experts and gives us a blueprint for the next several years.

LIFEDERMNET

In September 2006, we held our annual Cleveland Dermatological Society meeting at University Hospitals Case Medical Center where we first described the vision of the

Murdough Family Center for Psoriasis to a group of about 75 Northeast Ohio dermatologists. From this large group of dermatologists, we have formed a group of 15 community dermatologists entitled the Northern Ohio LIFEDERMNET – the Leaders Initiative for Excellence in Dermatology Network. This initial core group of dermatologists will help build our community outreach program. Our nurses and research fellow are in the process of visiting the first two community dermatology practices to work out the operational details.

New Psoriasis Fellow

We have set up a \$750,000 endowment to defray the costs of a research fellow, and as of February 1, 2007 our first clinical research fellow, Dr. Marjorie Yang, has joined our group. Dr. Yang is a young, energetic dermatologist who hit the ground running and is a fabulous addition to our group.

Psoriasis Patient Database

We have finalized our database which will allow us to gather key demographic and clinical data on every psoriasis patient that we see, formulated from our visits to other institutions and from our internal collaborative interactions. Our long term goal is to develop a comprehensive and extremely well characterized registry of several thousand patients with psoriasis. This registry will include questionnaire data, clinical features, and will also collect skin tissue and blood samples for research analysis. This repository of psoriasis data will allow us to answer critical questions about the clinical features, epidemiology, genetics, pathogenesis, and treatment of psoriasis.

Multidisciplinary Psoriasis Clinic

Another important milestone is the formation of a multidisciplinary psoriasis clinic. We have planned our first multidisciplinary clinic for April 25, 2007. The overarching goal of this clinic is to offer comprehensive care for psoriasis patients. We have developed and cultivated relationships with colleagues in Rheumatology, Psychiatry, Nursing, and Nutrition and patients being seen in the Murdough Family Center for Psoriasis Clinic will have the opportunity for true multidisciplinary care with access to all of these specialties.

Clinical Recruitment

On the clinical recruitment front, we have been interviewing nurses and nurse practitioners to work in the Murdough Family Center's community outreach program. The major role for these nurses will be to pilot, develop, coordinate and run the clinical regional network by traveling to the offices of the dermatologists in a 50-75 mile radius of Cleveland who have enthusiastically agreed to become involved (We are piloting this program with a group of 15 dermatologists who have expressed a strong desire to be the pioneers in this program so that we are able to perfect our processes before expanding this program to the entire Northeast Ohio area). The goals of the community network are to improve the care of psoriasis patients in the community by educating patients and their dermatologists about the disease, its psychosocial impact, and the latest therapeutic

advances. We have identified an ideal candidate for the first nurse-practitioner position and we will be making a job offer this week. We are also planning to initiate patient support groups and anticipate that our nurses will become involved in these important groups. As a matter of fact, the good press that the MFCP has already generated has led one new local psoriasis support group to contact us and work together with the Center. We envision that the majority of patients seen in the community regional network will continue to receive their care at their community dermatologist's office. However, a subset of patients (often those with more severe disease) may be interested and benefit from one or more consultations of the Multidisciplinary Psoriasis Clinic or referral to our Clinical Trials Unit for a research study.

Research Recruitment

In the area of research recruitment, we have hired a fellow, Dr. Somani, who is a dermatologist MD-PhD physician-scientist who we trained in Dermatology here at University Hospitals Case Medical Center. Dr. Sugiyama, an MD-PhD physician-scientist, who we trained in psoriasis immunology a few years ago, has accepted a faculty position with us, and will establish a psoriasis immunology laboratory on April 20, 2007.

Advisory Board Formulation

We have formulated two boards, one is a Patient Advisory Board and the other is an Executive Advisory Board. We have begun to recruit patients with psoriasis for the Patient Advisory Board and the content for our Executive Advisory Board has been set. We are planning our first meeting of the Executive Advisory Board in June to discuss our first six months of progress.