U-M Dermatology's Psoriasis Genetics Research Program, has identified a gene called PSORS1 that plays a role in determining who gets psoriasis. The research team, looked closely at genetic samples from 678 families in which some of the family members had early-onset psoriasis, and they identified a specific gene allele as the one that confers susceptibility to this form of the skin disease.

An allele is an alternate form (or spelling) of a gene. A person inherits a copy of a gene from each parent; sometimes the genes have the same spelling in their genetic code, but usually one gene in the pair has a slightly different spelling, giving most people two alleles of a gene. The allele HLA-Cw6, with a certain spelling in its code, is the one that renders individuals susceptible to psoriasis, according to team leader Dr. J.T. Elder, MD, PhD.

Previous research had suggested that a susceptibility gene might be found in a certain region of the major histocompatibility complex, a family of many genes that play a role in the immune response. Dr. Elder and his colleagues around the country and in Germany extensively studied the haplotypes in that region. (A haplotype is a set of alleles on different genes which are usually inherited together.) They discovered that in all the families they studied, all haplotypes containing HLA-Cw6 alleles, and only those haplotypes, were associated with psoriasis.

Having the HLA-Cw6 allele does not necessarily mean an individual will get psoriasis. There are other genes as yet unidentified which likely play a role. And environmental factors -like bacterial infections- play a part, triggering the onset of the disease in people who are susceptible. The benefit to finding a gene that makes people susceptible is that scientists may be able to target just that gene to interfere with the disease. Current treatments for psoriasis often suppress the immune system, leaving the person vulnerable to various infections. Ideally, treatments aimed at a particular gene would shut down only the process which causes the disease, providing relief from the psoriasis, and still leave a functioning immune system.

Psoriasis is an autoimmune disease in which newly forming skin cells rise to the surface of the skin before they have a chance to mature. These cells piling up on the surface of the skin result in patches of thick, inflamed skin often covered with silvery scales. These patches, called plaques, normally itch and feel sore.

Funding for this research was contributed by the National Center for Research Resources (a component of the National Institutes of Health), the National Psoriasis Foundation, and others.

For additional information refer to Nair RP, et al., Sequence and haplotype analysis supports HLA-C as the psoriasis susceptibility 1 gene. American Journal of Human Genetics 2006; vol. 78: pp. 827-851.

Dr. Sarah Jacobson will be joining a private practice in Palo Alto, California.
“Thank you to everyone for your support these past three years. I will miss working with all of you! Come visit us in California!”

Dr. Abena Ofori
“Thank you!!! I’d like to thank everyone in the Department of Dermatology for all of your support, instruction, and assistance over the past few years. You have all made this residency a wonderful experience, and I’ll never forget everything that you have given me! Thanks for helping me become so well prepared for “THE OUTSIDE!” I wish all of you the best in the years to come!

Dr. Timothy Rodgers will be entering private practice in Dallas, Texas.
“Thank you all for such a wonderful 3 years! It goes by in a blink. I wish everyone the very best of luck and happiness in their lives. You will be missed!”

Dr. Rob Gielczyk is staying on at U-M Dermatology to serve as an attending physician until 2007, at which time he plans to enter private practice in west Michigan.
“I just want to pass along my thanks to all those in the department who have made the past 3 years so much fun. Luckily, I have at least another year to spend with all of you, and that makes me very happy. For the incoming residents, I recommend treating the attending physicians with much respect, especially that new good-looking male attending. I forget his name, but he’s a heck of a guy.”

Dr. Rachel Gustin will be joining Jona Gill in private practice in Chelsea, Michigan.
“Thanks so much for all your teaching and support!”

Dr. Ryan Holzwarth
“I’d just like to thank all the faculty and staff at the U-M for a great educational experience.”

Dr. Sandra Paek, former faculty staff of our Cutaneous Surgery and Oncology Program, has moved to California, where she will enter private practice in San José. During her career at U-M Dermatology, Sandra served as resident, chief resident, Mohs surgery training program fellow, faculty and attending physician.
“I wanted to thank everyone for 6 wonderful years in Michigan. Michigan will always be my second home, and first in my heart. I will miss you all.”

Dr. Kristi Robson, former faculty staff of our Medical Dermatology Program was recruited to our clinical faculty in 2002. Dr. Robson treated patients at our Taubman and Reichert office locations. Kristi has moved to Iowa where she will enter private practice.
“It has been a privilege and a pleasure to have worked with you all, and I will miss you very much. I have learned so much in my time here and honestly wish I could stay. Thank you for all that you have done for me, I am grateful for all your kindness.”
AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS

- The Society for Investigative Dermatology presented Dr. Sewon Kang with the Galderma Acne Research Award in May 2006. Additionally, Dr. Kang became President-elect of The Photomedicine Society in March 2006.
- Dr. Mikhail Nikiforov is recipient of a Melanoma Research Foundation Junior Investigator Award. Also noteworthy, Dr. Nikiforov’s recent RO1 NIH Resarch Grant submission has received a stellar 3.3 percentile score.
- Dr. James T. Elder received the American Skin Association’s Annual Psoriasis Achievement Award in May 2006.
- Dr. Darius Karimipour is recipient of a Dermatology Foundation Career Development Award.
- Dr. Charles Ellis is recipient of a 2006 Superior Performance Award from the Veterans Affairs Ann Arbor Healthcare System.
- Dr. Kristi Robson was awarded the 2006 William B. Taylor Resident Teaching Award by the residents in recognition of her dedication and outstanding teaching skills.
- The 2006 William B. Taylor Dermatology Award was presented to two outstanding students: Anil Singal and Kevin Kia. Both were recognized for their contributions to the field of Dermatology.

CONGRATULATIONS

- Best wishes to Dr. Suresh & Nanda Patil, whose daughter Anusha (meaning morning star) was born March 8th weighing 7 lbs and measuring 20 inches. Dr. Patil is a Research Fellow in Dr. Nikiforov’s lab.
- Dr. Chris & Maria Bichakjian’s daughter, Chiara, was born on April 11th weighing, 8 lbs 5 oz and measuring 20.5 inches. Dr. Bichakjian see patients in the Cutaneous Oncology and Surgery clinic.
- Congratulations to new grandmother Denise Galazka (and family) whose grandson, Caleb, was born on St. Patrick’s Day, March 17. Denise is a Sr. Administrative Assistant in our Administrative offices.
- Best wishes to Jenny (Brown) and Eric Ferris, who were wed on June 24, 2006. Jenny is a Research Assistant in Dr. Dlugosz’s lab.

YOU’RE SUPER AWARDS!!!

Evans Bailey, MD*
Chris Bichakjian, MD*
Denise Brooks
Allen Bruce, MD *
Pearl Catalan*
Denise Chinni*
Mickie Cole
Claire Duey
Janice Eskridge*
Cheryllan Farvar
Kristin Fear*
Michael Goldfarb, MD
Johann Gudjonsson, MD
Rachel Gustin, MD*
Tonya Harrigan
Yolanda Helfrich, MD
Molly Herndon*
Ryan Holzwarth, MD
Mark Hutchin, MD
Jessica Johnson
Timothy Johnson, MD
Darius Karimipour, MD
Jennifer Keith
Kathryn Keeley
Lisa Maier, MD*
Sonia Martinez
Kelly McClean, MD
Debra McGurk*
Sandra Neesam*
Shari Nemeth*
Nicole Neuschler, MD*
Melissa Orr
Ressa Ochs*
Kristi Robson, MD*
Timothy Rodgers, MD*
Dana Sachs, MD
Jennifer Schwartz, MD
Ladan Shahabi, MD
Naomi Simon, MD
George Skandamis, MD
Wendy Smith
Dara Spearman, MD
Desiree Tomayko
Patricia Thompson
Christina Vassel*
Lori Vincent
Jennifer Vis, MD*
Timothy Wang, MD*
Sara Williams
Pat Zolkosky

* Indicates multiple awards
Yong Li, PhD is a Research Investigator under the direction of Dr. Gary Fisher in our Med Sci Labs. Dr. Li was recruited to Derm's faculty in May 2006 from the U-M Life Sciences Institute. He received his PhD in Microbiology from the Department of Genomics and Proteomics at Beijing Institute of Radiation Medicine, P.R. China in 2000 and his Master of Science in Biochemistry from the Beijing Institute of Radiation Medicine, P.R. China in 1997. Dr. Li received his postdoctoral training at the U-M Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology.

Laure Rittié, PhD, is a Research Investigator under the direction of Dr. Gary Fisher in the Dermatology Photoaging & Aging Research Program. Dr. Rittié received her PhD in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from the Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne, France in 2001 and her Master of Science in Cell Biology from the Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne, France in 1996. Dr. Rittié received postdoctoral training at the Université de Reims Champagne, France and at the University of Michigan, Department of Dermatology. She was recruited to Dermatology’s faculty in May 2006.

Rob Gielczyk, MD was recruited to join the U-M Dermatology clinical faculty in July 2006 and sees patients at both our Taubman Center and Reichert Building offices. Dr. Gielczyk received his undergraduate degree from the U-M and his medical degree with honors from the U-M Medical School. He also completed his internship in internal medicine and dermatology residency at the U-M.

Mathew Ludgate, MBChB was recruited in July 2006 to complete additional training in an advanced surgical fellowship at the U-M Cancer Center. He serves as faculty staff in the U-M Melanoma and Cutaneous Oncology and Surgery Program. Dr. Ludgate completed his medical degree with distinction at the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand. He then undertook four years of training in internal medicine and 18 months of advanced medical oncology training at the Dunedin Public Hospital. Subsequently, Dr. Ludgate pursued advanced dermatology and dermatologic surgery training under the supervision of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians at the Greenlane Clinical Center, Auckland, New Zealand.

2006 FACULTY PROMOTIONS

Timothy Wang, MD has been promoted to Associate Professor. Dr. Wang completed advanced fellowship training in melanoma and cutaneous oncology and surgery in 1999. He is presently faculty staff in the Melanoma and Cutaneous Oncology and Surgery Program and serves as Associate Director of the Mohs Micrographic Surgery and Cutaneous Oncology Fellowship Training Program.

Gary Fisher, PhD, Director of Photoaging and Aging Skin research, has been promoted to Professor. Dr. Fisher’s research studies the molecular mechanisms of sun-induced premature skin aging and the molecular mechanisms of natural skin aging. Dr. Fisher is the author of over a hundred published papers. Dr. Fisher is mentor to junior faculty in translational research and to post-doctoral fellows, medical students (at all levels) and diversity students in laboratory science. Also Dr. Fisher directs the basic science core curriculum course, taught to all residents in the Dermatology Department.