

Long-term Likelihood of Patch Testing, Academic Practice, and American Contact Dermatitis Society Membership Among North American Alexander Fisher Award Winners From 1989 to 2012

The Alexander Fisher Award (AFA) recognizes excellence in research among dermatology residents or medical students who make formal presentations at the annual American Contact Dermatitis Society (ACDS) meeting.

The aim of the study was to investigate long-term likelihood of patch testing, academic practice, and society membership among Alexander Fisher Award winners (AFAWs).

The AFAWs from 1989 to 2012 were identified with Internet searches to obtain their current practice location. Each practice was contacted by phone, and staff was asked whether the AFAW performed patch testing. Current ACDS membership was confirmed by ACDS leadership. Academic status was assessed by university association on practice Web sites.

Sixty-two awards were presented to 60 individuals from 1989 to 2012. Fifty AFAWs are actively practicing dermatology in the United States ($n = 43$) and Canada ($n = 7$). Of 50 practicing AFAWs, 18 (36%) are active patch testers, 29 (58%) do not perform patch testing, and 3 (6%) could not be reached or staff declined to answer. Of the 50, 14 (28%) practice in an academic setting, and 10 (20%) are current ACDS members.

In our survey, AFAWs have a higher likelihood of academic practice (20%) compared with average graduating US dermatology residents (8%),¹ a low to moderate likelihood of long-term patch testing (36%), and a low likelihood of long-term American Contact Dermatitis Society (ACDS) membership (20%). These data establish a baseline and may help identify

possible areas of improvement for ACDS and the future of patch testing in the United States. Whether one interprets these results as encouraging or discouraging is a matter of perspective. We consider this low likelihood of long-term ACDS membership and patch testing among Alexander Fisher Award winners (AFAWs) to be an area with great potential for improvement. Because AFAWs already have interest in contact allergy and are twice as likely as the average dermatology resident to pursue academic practice,¹ this group should be proactively pursued by the ACDS for long-term membership and active participation. Other potential strategies include offering several years of free membership as a part of the AFA, longitudinal mentoring with established ACDS members, and creating designated positions for AFAWs in ACDS committees. Further survey of AFAWs who do not patch test is warranted to identify specific logistical, economic, or other barriers to patch testing.

Dathan Hamann, MD

James S. Taylor, MD

Division of Dermatology

Wexner Medical Center

The Ohio State University, Columbus; and

Department of Dermatology

Cleveland Clinic Lerner

College of Medicine of Case

Western Reserve University, OH

REFERENCE

1. Wu JJ, Ramirez CC, Alonso CA, et al. Dermatology residency program characteristics that correlate with graduates selecting an academic dermatology career. *Arch Dermatol* 2006;142(7):845–850.

Address reprint requests to Dathan Hamann, MD, The Ohio State University Medical Center Columbus, 540 Offcenter Pl., Suite #240 Columbus, OH 43230. E-mail: dathanhamann@gmail.com; dathan.hamann@osumc.edu.

D.H. is the son of the owner of SmartPractice, a company that manufactures and distributes patch test supplies. J.S.T. has no funding or conflicts of interest to declare.

DOI: 10.1097/DER.0000000000000402

© 2018 American Contact Dermatitis Society. All Rights Reserved.