

Dermatology: A Challenge for Indian Pathologist

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Abstract

Dermatology as a speciality has seen exponential growth in the last decade. While the subspeciality is enjoying freeway driving many other subspecialities including Dermatopathology are stranded in a bottleneck traffic. Lack of training facilities in this subspeciality across the country and uncertainty of future career prospects in Dermatopathology may force youngsters to focus on other fields of specialization.

In many institution and labs, skin biopsy sections are read and reported by general pathologists.

Keywords: IADVL; Scholarships; UEMS; Dermatopathology.

INTRODUCTION

Dermatopathology is a subspeciality that focusses on the study and diagnosis of diseases of skin and associated mucous membranes, cutaneous appendages, hairs, nails and subcutaneous tissues. Although "dermatopathology" was first coined by Henry Sequin Jackson in 1792, progression towards the integration of clinical findings with pathological observations seen on a microscopic level was slow. In the present day, the evaluation is done through microscopic study with histological, histochemical, immunological, ultrastructural, microbiological and molecular techniques. The purpose of this article is

to highlight important details for those interested in pursuing dermatopathology subspeciality training.

Need for Training in Dermatopathology

Dermatopathology as a speciality has seen exponential growth in the last decade. While the subspeciality is enjoying freeway driving, many other subspecialities including dermatopathology are stranded in a bottleneck traffic. Lack of training facilities in the subspeciality across the country and uncertainty of future career prospects in Dermatopathology may force youngsters to focus on other fields of specialization.

Inadequate training during the postgraduate training years & to understand dermatopathology better to give insight into the disease which will help the clinician. Added subspecialisation provides an economic advantage to the practising pathologists. Moreover in order to get affiliation to an academic institution is a potential reason to get training in dermatopathology.

The fascination for histopathology is the most lucrative stimulus for searching training avenue in dermatopathology.

Considerations to look forward to while

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investing in a programme:

1. Time span: 1 to 2 years is minimum for basic understanding & training.
2. Cost effective: Self financing programmes are difficult to pursue. If stipend is offered it is very helpful. Availability of Stipend/scholarship is a bonus. Tuition fees waive off can be asked for.
3. Institute: The reputation of the college offering the programme and experts panel in the department is very important.
4. Location: Accessibility of the institute from your location is to be seen and its connectivity be it in India /abroad has to be considered.
5. Volume of cases: Most important factor for practical training.

Training Avenues in India

The options for training in India are limited. The fellowship course in Dermatopathology at MGMCRI, Pondicherry is of 1 year duration. Eligibility is MD/DNB (Dermatology/Pathology) or DDVL from a recognized institute. Fellowship in Dermatopathology under RGHHS in St. Johns Medical College & Hospital, Bangalore.

Fellowship course in Diagnostic dermatopathology (1 yr) course available to dermatologists at Seth G S Medical College & KEM Hospital Mumbai.

Training Options in India

Nowadays, Medvarsity and other online training programmes are also available.

IADVL: Indian association of dermatologists Venereologist & leprologist.

AIIMS: All India Institute of Medical Sciences

Training Options In United States:**Overseas Training Options**

The important considerations for the majority of these courses include:

A postgraduate degree in Dermatology/ Pathology.

6 months training in Pathology/ Dermatology trained doctors respectively.

TOEFL Score

2 to 3 letters of recommendation

Visa requirements

Popular Programmes:

1. Boston university school of medicine: International dermatopathology fellowship

2. Ackermann Academy

Training options in United Kingdom:

Name of the Programme	Resource person/Head	Place	Duration	Fee/stipend
Fellowship course in diagnostic dermatology	Dr Uday Khopkar	Seth GS Medical college & KEM Hospital	12 months	Rs 1 lakh fees for 1 year
IADVL Observerships	Dr Uday Khopkar	Seth GS Medical college & KEM Hospital	4 weeks and 2 weeks	Stipend of Rs 10000 for 4 weeks programme
	Prof Renu George	CMC Vellore	4 weeks & 2 weeks duration	Rs.10000 stipend for 4 weeks programme
Short & long term observership for Govt sponsored candidates	HOD, Dermatology & Venereology	AIIMS, New Delhi	Up to 6 month short term/2 year long term	Rs 2000 per month

Short or long term dermatopathology observerships are available at St Johns Institute of Dermatopathology, Kings college London. The department of dermatopathology also has much sought after 2 year fellowship that pays generous stipend but applicants need to be registered with the UK General Medical Council (GMC)

in order to apply. The deptt receives over 10000 dermatopathologists referral a year. Scholarships are available like Fulbright Scholar Programme, Commonwealth Scholarship, Chevening Masters scholarship and fellowship, IADVL International Dermatopathology observership are available.

Institute	Director	Duration	Fees \$	Specimen per year
Ackerman Academy New York	Dr Geoffrey Gotlieb Dr Ying Gao	4 -12 months	1000 per month	100,000
Boston University School of Medicine	Dr Jag Bhawan	1 or 2 years	15000 per year	30000
Wake forest school of Medicine, Winston-Salem, North Carolina	Dr Omar Sanguenza	1 year observership	22000 per year	17000
Medical college of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Wisconsin	Dr Sad suster	1 year only for pathologists		
Medical university of South Carolina	Dr John s Medcalf			12000
University of Vermont medical centre	Dr Deborah L cook	ECFMG Certificate required		
MD Anderson Cancer Centre, Houston, Texas	Dr Victor G Pinto	1 year American board eligible dermatologists or Pathologists may apply; is one of the 4 centres for the IADVL International Dermatopathology Observership Programme		

IADVL Stands for Indian association of dermatologists, Venereologists and Leprologists

ECFMG Stands for Educational commission of foreign medical graduates

THE FRANKFURT EXAM

The European union of medical specialists (UEMS) under the auspices of the International Committee for dermatopathology (ICDP) conducts the International Board Certifying Examination in Dermatopathology (Diploma in Dermatopathology, ICDP-UEMS) in Frankfurt Main, Germany in December every year that most trained dermatopathologists from all over the world eventually aim to clear after training.

CONCLUSION

Entering the world of Dermatopathology brings new challenges and rewards to the physician on a number of levels. Intellectually speaking, the required knowledge of dermatologic pathophysiology, appropriate selection of

Pathological tests for the patient and diagnosis based on the results and accurate communication to the consulting physician will provide career long stimulation.

Apart from the academic excitement, a physician should consider the logistics as well, including the educational investment and practical steps to enter or start a practice. Given the many avenues through which doctors may pursue dermatopathology, the decision to join the field is personal and hopefully considering the items that were outlined here will assist in the task.

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