

Fellowships in Complex Medical Dermatology

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RESIDENT PEARL

- Complex medical dermatology is a rewarding and fascinating subspecialty of dermatology, and additional training can be accomplished through a fellowship at a variety of prestigious institutions.

Complex medical dermatology fellowships currently are offered at 5 institutions in the United States. The decision to pursue this fellowship is individualized; however, additional training can prove to be beneficial when practicing in an environment with medically challenging patient populations.

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Complex medical dermatology has become an emerging field in dermatology. Although a rather protean and broad term, *complex medical dermatology* encompasses patients with autoimmune conditions, bullous disease, connective tissue disease, vasculitis, severe dermatoses requiring immunomodulation, and inpatient consultations. Importantly, dermatology inpatient consultations aid in lowering health care costs due to accurate diagnoses, correct treatment, and decreased hospital stays.¹ A fellowship is not required for holding an inpatient role in the hospital system as a dermatologist but can be beneficial. There are combined internal medicine–dermatology programs available for medical students applying to dermatology residency, but a complex medical dermatology fellowship is an option after residency for those who are interested. I believe that a focused complex medical dermatology fellowship differs from the training offered

in combined internal medicine–dermatology residency. My fellow colleagues in combined internal medicine–dermatology programs are exposed to systemic manifestations of cutaneous disease and are experts in the interplay between the skin and other organ systems. However, the focus of their programs is with the intention of becoming double boarded in internal medicine and dermatology with comprehensive exposure to both fields. In my fellowship, I am able to tailor my schedule to focus on any dermatologic disease such as connective tissue disease, pruritus, graft vs host disease, and Merkel cell carcinoma. I ultimately can determine a niche in dermatology and hone my skills for a year under supervision.

Available Fellowships

Fellowship Locations—Importantly, the complex medical dermatology fellowship is not accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, which can make it difficult to identify and apply to programs. The complex medical dermatology fellowship is different than a rheumatology–dermatology fellowship, cutaneous oncology fellowship, pediatric dermatology fellowship, or other subspecialty fellowships such as those in itch or autoimmune blistering diseases. The fellowship often encompasses gaining clinical expertise in many of these conditions. I performed a thorough search online and spoke with complex medical dermatologists to compile a list of programs that offer a complex medical dermatology fellowship: Brigham and Women’s Hospital (Boston, Massachusetts); University of California San Francisco (San Francisco, California); University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania); Cleveland Clinic (Cleveland, Ohio); and New York University

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Complex Medical Dermatology Fellowship Information

Program (location)	Website	Director(s)
Cleveland Clinic (Cleveland, Ohio)	https://my.clevelandclinic.org/departments/dermatology-plastic-surgery/medical-professionals/dermatology-fellowships#complex-medical-dermatology-fellowship-tab	Anthony Fernandez, MD, PhD
University of California San Francisco (San Francisco, California)	https://dermatology.ucsf.edu/fellowships/complex-medical-dermatology-fellowship	Lindy P. Fox, MD
New York University (New York, New York)	https://med.nyu.edu/departments-institutes/dermatology/education/clinical-fellowships/advanced-medical-dermatology	Jo-Ann M. Latkowski, MD
Brigham and Women's Hospital (Boston, Massachusetts)	https://www.brighamandwomens.org/dermatology/fellowships	Arash Mostaghimi, MD, MPA, MPH; Lauren M. Guggina, MD
University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)	https://dermatology.upenn.edu/education/fellowship-training/	Misha Rosenbach, MD; Robert Micheletti, MD

(New York, New York)(Table). Only 1 spot is offered at each of these programs.

Reason to Pursue the Fellowship—There are many reasons to pursue a fellowship in complex medical dermatology such as a desire to enhance exposure to the field, to practice in an academic center and develop a niche within dermatology, to practice dermatology in an inpatient setting, to improve delivery of health care to medically challenging populations in a community setting, and to become an expert on cutaneous manifestations of internal and systemic disease.

Application—There is no standardized application or deadline for this fellowship; however, there is a concerted attempt from some of the programs to offer interviews and decisions at a similar time. Deadlines and contact information are listed on the program websites, along with more details (Table).

Recommendations—I would recommend reaching out at the beginning of postgraduate year (PGY) 4 to these programs and voicing your interest in the fellowship. It is possible to set up an away rotation at some of the programs, and if your program offers elective time, pursuing an away rotation during PGY-3 or early in PGY-4 can prove to be advantageous. Furthermore, during my application cycle I toured the University of California San Francisco, University of Pennsylvania, and Brigham and Women's Hospital to gain further insight into each program.

Brigham and Women's Complex Medical Dermatology Fellowship

I am currently the complex medical dermatology fellow at Brigham and Women's Hospital, and it has been an outstanding experience thus far. The program offers numerous subspecialty clinics focusing solely on cutaneous-oncology, psoriasis, rheumatology-dermatology, skin of color, mole mapping backed by artificial intelligence, cosmetics, high-risk skin cancer, neutrophilic dermatoses, patch testing, phototherapy, psychodermatology, and transplant dermatology. In addition to a wide variety of subspecialty clinics, fellows have the opportunity to participate in inpatient dermatology rounds and act as a junior attending. I appreciate the flexibility of this program combined with the ability to work alongside worldwide experts. There are numerous teaching opportunities, and all of the faculty are amiable and intelligent and emphasize wellness, education, and autonomy. Overall, my experience and decision to pursue a complex medical dermatology fellowship has been extremely rewarding and invaluable. I am gaining additional skills to aid medically challenging patients while pursuing my true passion in dermatology.

REFERENCE

1. Sahni DR. Inpatient dermatology consultation services in hospital institutions. *Cutis*. 2023;111:E11-E12. doi:10.12788/cutis.0776.