

Korean Dermatological Association and Korean Society for Investigative Dermatology: Brief History and Future Prospects

Korean dermatology began in the late nineteenth century when American missionary doctors introduced Western medicine to Korea. Before the Second World War, the medical system in general was similar to the Japanese system; however, dermatologists and their training institutes were few in proportion to the total Korean population. In this period, there were several pioneering dermatologists, including Kung-Sun Oh.

After the Second World War, in October 1945, the Korean Dermatological Association (KDA) was established by dermato-urologists as the Chosun Dermato-Urology Association (dermatology as a field was separated from the urology societies in 1954). After the devastating Korean War in the early 1950s, the entire medical system gradually came under American influence. The board certification

system of producing dermatology specialists has enriched the field of academic medicine as well as medical practice in general. Korean dermatology is now a thriving discipline, and the KDA includes 1,641 active members (dermatology specialists), many of whom have had a global impact on dermatological science.

The KDA is currently led by a president, who holds office for a term of 1 year, and a chairman of the board of directors, who holds office for 2 years. The role of the president is, for the most part, symbolic and representative, and it is the chairman of the board of directors who administers all practical affairs related to the organization. The KDA holds two annual meetings, one in April and one in October. These are clinically oriented meetings, but they include some research. In January 1960, the KDA published the first issue of the *Korean*

Editor's Note

Those following the growth of dermatological science over the past three decades have witnessed a rather dramatic increase in scientific contributions from East Asia. On the other hand, it is only more recently that this growth has extended beyond the borders of Japan and Australia. With more than one of my five years as Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal* completed, I can tell our audiences that investigators from three other economic regions are now submitting (and publishing) increasing numbers of high-quality manuscripts. To alert our global scientific community to this transition and to remind them of opportunities for collaboration, I will invite leaders from three East Asian regions to describe

recent developments. For personal, family reasons, I begin with Korean science, as described by Professors Eun and Cho. As background to their Editorial, a brief audit has revealed that the number of published papers from authors working entirely in Korean institutions has doubled over the past decade. In the coming months, I will invite additional contributions from representatives of China and Taiwan. (Please note that I take no stand on whether Taiwan is part of China; that is for others to settle. My decision reflects the fact that submissions from these regions arrive with different return addresses.) My goal is simple: to enhance the growth of dermatological science around the globe.

Paul R. Bergstresser

Journal of Dermatology, which has undergone continuous expansion in content and frequency and is currently published monthly. To network with the global scientific community, the KDA decided to publish a second, complementary journal in English. The first issue of the *Annals of Dermatology* was published in January 1989, and it is currently published quarterly. In 1982, the KDA formed six subcommittees dedicated to various areas of dermatological research. These research subcommittees, of which there are now 14, meet annually.

Toward the latter half of the 1980s, the international dermatology community began to assemble a network of research-oriented societies as more emphasis was placed on the benefits of dermatological research. The Society for Investigative Dermatology, the European Society for Dermatological Research (ESDR), and the Japanese Society for Investigative Dermatology have combined efforts to organize a joint meeting, known as the International Investigative Dermatology Meeting. To participate in this collaboration, it was necessary for Korea to establish its own national society for dermatological research with members who are not only dermatologists but also scientists in related fields of medicine. Thus, the Korean Society for Investigative Dermatology (KSID) was founded in March 1991 at its first general meeting and scientific congress by 150 members. The number of members has doubled since then, and the KSID holds an annual scientific meeting.

The Asia–Oceania region, including Korea, is one of the world's most rapidly developing economic regions, and the field of investigative dermatology in this region is expected to expand accordingly in the near future. Consequently, many Korean dermatological investigators have supported the founding of the proposed Asia–Oceania Society for Investigative Dermatology (AOSID). Modeled after the ESDR, the AOSID is expected to include all dermatological

research societies in Asia and Oceania, encouraging more active participation in the international investigative dermatology arena. There is no doubt that establishment of the AOSID would lead to better opportunities to expand dermatological research in this region. The KSID is formally contacting key persons actively conducting dermatological research in Asian nations and also contacting established dermatological research societies in this region, such as Australia, Japan, and Taiwan.

In October 2008, the 8th Asian Dermatological Congress was held in Seoul, with the attendance of 1,115 dermatologists from 25 nations, most of them in Asia. During the congress researchers from seven Asian nations agreed to hold the first symposium of the Asian Pacific Society for Investigative Dermatology (APSID) in conjunction with the KSID Annual Meeting in March 2009 in Seoul, Korea. At the congress, they decided to release a formal article discussing the future direction of APSID.

In 2011, the 22nd World Congress of Dermatology will be held in Seoul, Korea. Based on the past World Congresses in Paris and Buenos Aires, we expect nearly 20,000 people to attend this important global event. There is no doubt that such events will facilitate and strengthen dermatology in Korea, as well as highlight the growing enthusiasm and productivity of Korean investigative dermatologists.

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