

# Interviews



Introducing our new editorial board! The AMJ team caught up with Michael Gold, the Editor-in-Chief of *Dermatology*, *The American Medical Journal*, and board members Neal Bhatia, Brian Hibler, and Jacqueline Watchmaker, to discuss their careers to date, unique challenges presented by dermatology, and their plans for shaping the journal. We also had the pleasure of speaking to Andrew Alexis, who has dedicated a significant portion of his career to advancing patient care, research, and education pertaining to dermatologic disorders that are prevalent in populations with skin of color.



## Michael Gold

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### Citation:

Dermatol AMJ. 2024;1[1]:43-44.  
<https://doi.org/10.33590/dermatolamj/NJSO3857>.

### Q1 What initially sparked your interest in dermatology, and how has that passion evolved throughout your career?

My interest in dermatology comes from the fact that, as a teenager, I had bad acne. I was fortunate to have seen Albert Kligman, the innovator of tretinoin, who helped me more than anyone else had been able to help at that time. I became fascinated with what dermatology entails: medicine, surgery, and cosmetic therapies.

### Q2 With the field of dermatology constantly evolving, how do you stay updated on the latest advancements and techniques?

Dermatology is evolving every day, both medically and aesthetically. I find myself reading more and more journal articles on important new

breakthroughs, perhaps more than I did years ago. I also am fortunate that I oversee several dermatology meetings and attend many; this is where we get our information on the latest trends and medicines.

### Q3 As the Editor-in-Chief, how do you envision the future of dermatology research, and the role *Dermatology AMJ* will play in shaping the field?

I envision the medical dermatology realm to continue having explosive growth, and someday, we will have the ability to cure some of the skin diseases that are prevalent in our society. As a resident, a long time ago, that was not something that even came into our minds. 'Cure' is now closer than ever for a lot of our skin concerns.

**Q4** In your opinion, what are the most pressing challenges and opportunities facing dermatology research and practice today?

The most pressing issue facing dermatologists today is the access to our wonderful medicines. We have to be able to get them to our patients, and at an affordable rate. If the prescription medicine costs 100,000 USD per year, and our patient's co-pay is astronomical, then what is the point? If we have access to them, our patients, who are key, will benefit.

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**Q5** Dermatology often involves addressing both medical and cosmetic concerns. How do you balance the medical needs of your patients with their cosmetic desires?

I think those who practice dermatology can easily separate the medical and cosmetic worlds. I always tell the medical dermatology doctors that, if you are removing a skin cancer, you are looking for the best cosmetic result with that procedure; so, in essence, you are also a cosmetic dermatologist. We do have lasers and other energy-based devices that are playing more of a role in our patients with acne, rosacea, and with those affected by psoriasis and vitiligo. So, cosmetic devices are helping patients in medical dermatology. And, even with our neurotoxins, we have uses for them in the medical dermatology space, as well as in our normal cosmetic uses.

**Q6** What do you find most rewarding about being a dermatologist, and conversely, what are some of the biggest challenges you face in your practice?

The most rewarding thing I do is to make someone better with their skin concern; taking someone suffering from a skin problem, and resolving that issue, and seeing them smile and get back to their normal daily routine. Patient care is what it is all about. The biggest challenge is the access to some of what I want to do.

**Q7** In your opinion, what are some common misconceptions about dermatological conditions, and how do you work to educate your patients about them?

The misconceptions come from those who spend most of their time online trying to self-diagnose and treat themselves. They think at times they know more than we do. I always tell people not to be 'Doctor Google', as most dermatologists should be able to determine most/every rash or skin concern pretty easily, and come up with a treatment plan that should improve, or take care of, that concern.

**Q8** With a portfolio boasting over 300 published articles, the establishment of a globally recognized conference on aesthetic medicine, and the founding of a skincare center, what accomplishment are you most proud of?

All of that is great, but none of it would have been accomplished without the support of my wife, Cindee. We have been married 42 years, and raised two wonderful kids, and they have been behind everything that I have done, and will do moving forward. ●

