

Resources for skin of color images



To the Editor: We commend Adelekun et al¹ for emphasizing a deficiency of skin of color (SOC) images in textbooks. Only 1 of 6 textbooks had a greater than 1% increase in representation of phototypes V/VI from 2006 to 2020, and half of textbooks excluded images of dark-skinned patients with very common dermatologic conditions (ie, acne, psoriasis). SOC images depicting dermatologic conditions, such as erythema dyschromicum perstans, commonly seen in darker skin types, were often excluded. The authors recommended referencing textbooks focusing on patients of color, like Taylor and Kelly's *Dermatology for Skin of Color and Asian Skin: A Reference Color Atlas of Dermatology and Venereology*.¹ We concur with Adelekun et al¹ that there is an urgent need to include dermatologic images of darker complexions in textbooks; however, publishing timelines are typically much longer for textbooks compared with journals and online resources. In this letter,

we suggest additional resources for SOC images (Table I).

Many dermatology journals have placed increased emphasis on curating SOC images, with online links to find these materials easily. For example, *JAAD Case Reports* homepage includes a SOC link redirecting to relevant articles with images. On the *JDD* homepage, a SOC link features the journal's latest SOC articles and images. *MDedge Dermatology's* Diversity in Medicine section redirects to SOC articles/images from *Cutis* and *Dermatology News*.

Many dermatologic organizations provide useful SOC images on their websites. We previously analyzed images on the American Academy of Dermatology Public Education website to identify for SOC inclusion/exclusion (June 30–July 2, 2020).² Although there was a need for more SOC images depicting certain diseases and conditions, the keloid and vitiligo sections had large proportions of SOC images, with skin types V/VI accounting for 63% and 75% of images, respectively. Additionally, the

Table I. Resources for skin of color images

Name	Website	Cost	Features/advantages	Search settings/limitations
Journals				
JAAD Case Reports	Jaadcasereports.org	Open Access	Collections section with SOC link, 74 SOC articles (date of search: 12/10/20) Optional monthly e-mail alerts for new SOC content	Cannot sort or filter by condition Can search within collection SOC link found at the bottom of the page
Journal of Drugs in Dermatology	Jddonline.com	Subscription required for full JDD online access, also accessible through many institutions Free for US Dermatology health care workers Free—Case reports, current and archived issues of eJDD	Dermatologic Topics SOC link, featuring latest SOC news, research, images SOC link easy to find on right side of page	Cannot filter or sort by SOC topic Only shows latest articles, not all articles
Cutis	MDedge.com/dermatology	Unlimited access with free Medscape Network Account	MDedge Dermatology homepage with Diversity in Medicine section, with SOC articles/images from Cutis and Dermatology News Diversity in Medicine link bolded and easy to find	Cannot sort or search within this section

Continued

Table I. Cont'd

Name	Website	Cost	Features/advantages	Search settings/limitations
Dermatologic Societies				
American Academy of Dermatology	Aad.org/public	Free	Public Education website has information and images on various dermatologic diseases and conditions Keloid, vitiligo, sarcoidosis, and scar pages have high proportion of SOC images Diseases and Conditions found easily at the top of the page Easy to navigate between various conditions	Birthmark, rosacea, ringworm, blistering disorders, and skin cancer sections have few SOC images
Skin of Color Society	Skinofcolorsociety.org	Free	Promotes awareness within the special interest of SOC Contains topics/images on skin diseases that affect SOC patients Dermatology Education found easily at the top of the page	Each topic contains a maximum of one image Easy to navigate between various conditions
Online Resources VisualDX	Visualdx.com	Subscription, also accessible through many institutions	Contains 40,378 clinical images, with 53.9% (21,744) skin types I-II, 19.1% (7722) III-IV, 21.2% (8,555) V-VI and 5.8% (2327) indeterminate (no skin type assigned, corneal and mucosal images) (Heidi Halton—Image Collection Manager, personal communication, December 9, 2020) Dermatology Skin of Color easily found on front page Very user friendly	Can search by diagnosis or by physical exam findings

Continued

Table I. Cont'd

Name	Website	Cost	Features/advantages	Search settings/limitations
Skin Deep	Dftbskindeep.com	Free	Currently 500 images (adding about 20 images/week), around 95% are of SOC (Tessa Davis—Don't Forget The Bubbles, personal communication, December 11, 2020) Easy to navigate between various conditions	No option to filter for SOC images only Lists all diagnoses A-Z Can search by description, diagnoses, and body part

sarcoidosis and scar pages had roughly equal representations of all skin types.² The SOC Society's website has a Dermatology Education section with articles on skin diseases that impact SOC patients. Of the 22 topics, 16 (72.7%) include a SOC image.

Other online resources are also available. VisualDx is a subscription-based service with photographs and educational materials on various conditions. In October 2020, the website added a new feature, such that morphologies, differential diagnoses, and specific disease entities can be searched easily by skin color. DFTB—Skin Deep is a free database with images of medical conditions portraying a diverse array of skin tones. Searches can be sorted by description, diagnoses, or body area.

These resources were selected based on accessibility, number, and proportion of SOC images within the section (50% or more), covering a broad spectrum of conditions. Suggested resources emphasize SOC education and/or have dedicated SOC sections.

We agree that there is a need for increased efforts to include diverse dermatologic images in textbooks. In the interim, dermatology journals, dermatologic organization websites, and online databases can help meet the need for SOC images for teaching purposes. We hope that our suggestions of additional resources for SOC images will be helpful for medical

student, resident, and attending education and in caring for and educating patients.

Michelle J. Chang, BA,^a and Shari R. Lipner, MD, PhD^b

From Drexel University College of Medicine, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania^a and Weill Cornell Medicine, Department of Dermatology, New York, New York.^b

Funding sources: None.

IRB approval status: Not applicable.

Reprints not available from the author(s).

Correspondence to: Shari R. Lipner, MD, PhD, 1305 York Avenue, New York, NY 10021

E-mail: sbl9032@med.cornell.edu

Conflicts of interest

None disclosed.

REFERENCES

1. Adelekun A, Onyekaba G, Lipoff JB. Skin color in dermatology textbooks: an updated evaluation and analysis. *JAAD*. 2021; 84(1):P194-P196.
2. Chang MJ, Lipner SR. Analysis of skin color on the American Academy of Dermatology Public Education website. *JDD*. 2020; 19(12):1236-1237.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaad.2021.01.040>