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American Vitiligo Research Foundation
"We Walk By Faith, Not By Sight"
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Welcome to the American Vitiligo Foundation

2013 Annual Meeting

Summary of AVRF 2013 talks, by Peggy Wallace

Dr. Karin Schallreuter, M.D. "Vitiligo: What Can We Do? From the Bench to the Bedside."

Dr. Schallreuter is a dermatologist affiliated with the Center for Skin Sciences (at the University of Bradford, U.K.) and the Institute for Pigmentary Disorders (at the University of Griefswald, Germany). She described the science of how excessive oxidative stress, caused by decreased catalase activity and increased hydrogen peroxide, is present in vitiligo skin and can even become systemic (throughout the body). She mentioned that although there is evidence of increased DNA damage from this oxidative stress, there is no increase in skin cancer risk in vitiligo because a protective protein is also activated. PC-KUS, her pseudocatalase cream which requires UV light exposure to activate, can help reduce the hydrogen peroxide by replacing catalase activity, stimulating various degrees of repigmentation. Success of the therapy was not related to how long the patient had had vitiligo, or the normal skin color. She also spoke about therapy at the Dead Sea, where the salt content of the water and the UV levels from the sunlight increases effectiveness of the PC-KUS, and repigmentation can last for 3 months. PC-KUS is only available through Dr. Schallreuter's clinic in Germany.

Mr. John Torrico "Vitiligo and Narrowband UV-B at Home: The Ideal Long-Term Solution"

Mr. Torrico is a representative of the company UV BioTek, which produces equipment for ultraviolet light-based skin therapy. He brought some of the home units to display, and described how the UV light therapy is used at home, with a doctor's prescription. He answered a number of questions, discussing the availability of different sizes of units, cost, insurance issues, lifespan of the lamps, and situations when patients are on photosensitizing drugs or have sunburn.

Dr. Peggy Wallace, Ph.D. "How Genes are Involved in Vitiligo"

Dr. Wallace is a molecular geneticist affiliated with the University of Florida College of Medicine. She described the evidence for genetic contributions to risk of developing vitiligo (especially genes regulating

inflammation and oxidative stress), and how it is likely that environmental triggers cause onset in those who are genetically predisposed to vitiligo. She described how genetics research is done, from DNA extraction from samples such as blood or spit, to looking at variants in candidate genes in cases versus controls, and in families. This research is growing, both at the genome-wide level and the candidate-gene level. Once risk gene variants are identified, scientists can examine how these cause the increased risk. Understanding this may help reveal strategies for better therapies, and/or help determine who is a good candidate for particular therapies based on genetic differences.




Mr. Scott Jorgensen

Mr. Jorgensen told his story to the entire group, parents and children together. He was invited to speak because a child with vitiligo was inspired by how Mr. Jorgensen became a successful, professional wrestler and mixed martial artist with the Ultimate Fighting Championship league, while also having vitiligo. Mr. Jorgensen began wrestling in childhood, and during high school, when vitiligo began to appear on his arms, he won the Alaska state championship twice. He obtained a bachelor's degree in Psychology at Boise State University, where he was a Pacific conference wrestling champion and finished in the top 12 in the NCAA tournament 3 years in a row. A couple of years after college, he decided to pursue his passion and entered the field of professional fighting. The vitiligo then progressed more rapidly, to the point of where he has now lost most of his pigmentation. Scott said that he did not receive much teasing up through college, which he thought was due to the limited area involved and the fact that he was a successful wrestler, which gave him confidence and also might have intimidated bullies. Even now, with international notariety and a busy twitter account, an occasional negative message about his vitiligo is quickly put down by his fans. He is grateful for the support, which helps him ignore such remarks. But he acknowledged that these types of comments have the potential to be very hurtful, especially if directed at children with vitiligo. He reminded the kids that people who say hurtful things actually feel insecure and are trying to make themselves feel better by putting others down. He encouraged the kids to find their passion and work hard to excel, to build confidence and success, and to have integrity and believe in themselves regardless of what other people say. He supported the AVRF's goals of trying to educate the public and support research, so that the best therapies possible will be available for those who want it, and those who do not want therapy can find acceptance within themselves and among others.

FOR MORE DETAILS SEE BELOW

[" 2013 AVRF CONFERENCE THOUGHTS AND PICTURES"](#)



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The logo for UVBIOTEK. It features a stylized purple cube icon on the left. To its right, the word "UVBIOTEK" is written in a large, bold, purple font. Below "UVBIOTEK" is the tagline "PHOTOTHERAPY DESIGNED TO FIT™" in a smaller, purple font.

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