

# ADVANCES IN INTEGRATIVE DERMATOLOGY



EDITED BY  
KATLEIN FRANÇA | TORELLO LOTTI

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## Advances in Integrative Dermatology



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## Contents

**Acknowledgements** *ix*

**Foreword** *xi*

**List of Contributors** *xiii*

- 1 Advances in Integrative Dermatology: Modifying the Concepts from the Past to Change the Future of Dermatology** *1*  
*Katlein França and Torello Lotti*
- 2 Psycho-Neuro-Endocrine-Immunology: A Psychobiological Concept** *9*  
*Torello Lotti and Katlein França*
- 3 Psychoneurocutaneous Medicine** *25*  
*Mohammad Jafferany, Paul Pastolero, and Katlein França*
- 4 Acne** *33*  
*Bárbara R. Ferreira, José C. Cardoso, José P. Reis, and Américo Figueiredo*
- 5 Rosacea** *57*  
*Victor Gabriel Clatici and Cristiana Voicu*
- 6 Seborrheic Dermatitis** *71*  
*David E. Castillo, Ilana Gunczler, Katlein França, and Jonette Keri*
- 7 Autoimmune Skin Disorders** *89*  
*Francesca Satolli, Miriam Rovesti, and Claudio Feliciani*
- 8 Vitiligo** *103*  
*Serena Gianfaldoni and Torello Lotti*
- 9 The Combined Approach to Atopic Dermatitis** *119*  
*Christopher Bridgett, Peter Norén, and Richard Staughton*
- 10 Psoriasis** *131*  
*Uwe Wollina*

- 11 Urticaria** 145  
*Li-Ping Zhao and Xing-Hua Gao*
- 12 Lichen Planus and Lichenoid Disorders** 163  
*Valeria Mateeva and Snejina Vassileva*
- 13 Itch: An Integrative Approach** 187  
*Radomir Reszke and Jacek C. Szepietowski*
- 14 Infections of the Skin** 231  
*Carmen Maria Salavastru, Adelina Maria Sendrea, Stefana Cretu, and George Sorin Tiplica*
- 15 Nonmelanoma Skin Cancer** 257  
*Anagha Bangalore Kumar, Yasser Al-Qubaisy, and Katlein França*
- 16 Melanoma** 271  
*Karls Raimonds*
- 17 The Microbiome in Hair Disorders** 289  
*Andy Goren, Maja Kovacevic, John McCoy, Mirna Situm, Zeljana Bolanca, Andrija Stanimirovic, Rachita Dhurat, Jill Chitalia, Aseem Sharma, and Torello Lotti*
- 18 Integrative Treatment for Chronic Wounds** 295  
*Evan Darwin, Alexandra R. Vaughn, and Hadar Lev-Tov*
- 19 Diet and Skin** 321  
*Veronica Di Nardo, Farah Daaboul, Catherine E. Amey, and Victoria Barygina*
- 20 Supplements and Skin** 345  
*Veronica Di Nardo*
- 21 Water and Dermatology** 351  
*Belma Türsen*
- 22 Sleep and Skin** 361  
*Ladan Mostaghimi*
- 23 Exercise and Skin** 367  
*Veronica Di Nardo, Aurelio Conte, Francesca Finelli, and Torello Lotti*
- 24 Skin and Pollution** 379  
*Katerina Damevska, Suzana Nikolovska, Jana Kazandjjeva, Bisera Kotevska Trifunova, and Georgeta Bocheva*
- 25 Cosmeceuticals** 393  
*Jaishree Sharad*



- 26 Botulinum Toxin: Cosmetic and Noncosmetic Dermatological Uses** 413  
*Jaishree Sharad*
- 27 Ayurvedic Dermatology** 457  
*Anagha Bangalore Kumar, Sushmitha Grama Srinivasan, and Raghavendra Rao*
- 28 Acupuncture** 467  
*Paolo Amori and Liguori Aldo*
- 29 Moxibustion in Dermatology** 477  
*Ümit Türsen and Begüm Ünlü*
- 30 Cupping Treatment in Dermatology** 483  
*Begüm Ünlü and Ümit Türsen*
- 31 Biofeedback** 487  
*Jacopo Lotti*
- 32 Meditation, Hypnosis, and Psychotherapy for Skin Disorders** 503  
*Philip D. Shenefelt*
- 33 Dermatoethics and Dermatobioethics in Integrative Dermatology** 513  
*Reginaldo de França, Aparecida Porto França, and Katlein França*
- Index** 521



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*“If I have seen further it is by standing  
on the shoulders of giants”*

(Isaac Newton)

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Avanti!

Katlein França, MD, PhD  
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## Foreword

Integrative dermatology combines conventional treatments with the complementary use of botanicals, herbal medicines, and nutritional guidance, as well as mind–body interventions such as hypnosis, biofeedback therapy, and mindfulness. The question “Could modern dermatology be considered to have two distinct camps?” has been debated. These proposed camps may be conceived of thusly: on one side, a growing number of dermatologists armed with dietary advice, nutritional supplements, and psychodermatological interventions; on the

other side, dermatologists providing traditional therapies such as biologics, immunosuppressants, antihistamines, and steroids. We believe that, in the future, the training of dermatologists should take an integrative approach, combining conventional and complementary treatments. Thanks to this unique book, tomorrow’s dermatologists will have the medical knowledge and necessary skills to safely practice evidence-based integrative dermatology.

Dr. Ümit Türsen



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## 1

## Advances in Integrative Dermatology: Modifying the Concepts from the Past to Change the Future of Dermatology

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*“Every writer creates his own precursors.  
His work modifies our conception of the  
past, as it will modify the future.”*

Jorge Luis Borges

### Introduction

Medical practices that reside outside the mainstream medical structures have existed for centuries. [1] The origins of medicine are deeply rooted in civilization’s cultural beliefs, experiences, and observations, and those practicing medicine believed that the body and the mind were not two separate entities. In the 1600s Rene Descartes, in an attempt to protect the body from spirits, separated the body from the mind. This was the beginning of evidence-based medicine where the understanding of parts would lead to an understanding of the whole [2]. Subsequent developments such as antibiotics, other pharmaceuticals, anesthetics, and sterile surgical procedures gave a different perspective to medicine [3]. In particular, the discovery of antibiotics in 1928 boosted the pharmaceutical model we have today which emphasizes drugs as a primary means to treat disease. In Western civilizations, complementary and alternative medicines (CAMs) only began to re-emerge after the 1960s with the awareness

that chronic diseases were replacing acute diseases as the predominant health problem, and that a reductionist pharmaceutical model alone could not be sufficient for the prevention or treatment of these chronic diseases [4].

Different concepts and terms were given to describe the Integrative Medicine field: holistic medicine, alternative or complementary medicine, and then complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) [5]. The authors of this chapter understand that Integrative Medicine encompasses the coordination of conventional medicine with complementary therapies. The same concept applies to the Integrative Dermatology field. The skin is the largest organ of the human body interacting with other organs and responding to psychological, endocrines, and nervous stimuli through the Psycho-Neuro-Endocrine-Immune system [6]. The integrative approach consists of a comprehensive evaluation of the physical, biological, psychological, social, and environmental overlapping aspects that affect the patient’s life, offering them conventional and complementary therapies with scientific basis. The integrative approach is based on the concept that every human being has a “diffuse brain” that commands a cross-talk of messengers (cytokines, neuropeptides, hormones, growth factors, etc.) involved in the Psycho-Neuro-Endocrine-Immune system.

This book explores a new kind of dermatological healthcare. It is patient centered, and considers the physical, biological, psychological, social, and environmental aspects of the patient's life. It is based on dermatological healthcare promotion and skin diseases prevention, and embraces evidence-based conventional and complementary therapies.

## Integrative Dermatology: Conventional and Complementary Dermatology

### Conventional Dermatology

Also called allopathic dermatology, mainstream dermatology, orthodox dermatology, or Western dermatology, this healthcare model of dermatology is generally taught in traditional medical schools and dermatology specialization programs. It uses evidence-based knowledge and uses drugs, surgery, and minimally invasive procedures as a form of treatment.

### Complementary Dermatology

Complementary dermatology refers to a group of diagnostic and therapeutic disciplines that are used together with conventional dermatology. Complementary dermatology is different from alternative dermatology. Whereas complementary dermatology is used together with conventional dermatology, alternative

dermatology is used in place of conventional dermatology [7, 8] (Figures 1.1 and 1.2).

## Pillars of the Integrative Approach

### Physical Findings

**What does the patient present, and is visible to the physician?**

Greeting the patient is the first step to establish rapport between the healthcare provider and the patient. In general, a handshake seems to be the most appropriate way to start a consultation. However, religious and cultural aspects may interfere in this process, so the healthcare professional should remain sensitive to nonverbal cues that might indicate whether patients are open to this behavior. The physicians should introduce themselves using their first and last names and also call the patients by their first and last names, at least in the initial contact, following the national patient safety recommendations concerning patient identification. [9, 10]

The physician should ask the reason for the visit. The interview should address the duration and location of the patient's cutaneous diseases (if any), other diseases, family medical history, use of and allergy to medications, sun exposure, current and previous skincare regimens, daily habits including exercise and diet, and the patient's emotional state [11]. More questions should be asked during the physical examination as needed.



**Figure 1.1** Integrative dermatology: combination of conventional dermatology and complementary dermatology.