

## THE STATE OF PHOTOTHERAPY EDUCATION IN U.S. DERMATOLOGY PROGRAMS

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### BACKGROUND

A number of dermatologic conditions, including psoriasis, are responsive to phototherapy with ultraviolet light (UVA or UVB). However, usage of phototherapy is declining in the United States. It is unclear how this decline in the usage of phototherapy has affected training of dermatologists. Are dermatology residency programs training residents in phototherapy?

The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) and the American Board of Dermatology (ABD) guidelines for residency training suggest that resident training in Dermatology should include “knowledge of and competence in the performance of procedures in...photobiology,” and that, “an understanding of the basic properties of the electromagnetic spectrum is needed for the resident to become knowledgeable about the effects of various forms of this energy in the cause of disease and about their use in dermatologic diagnosis and therapy.”

### OBJECTIVES

- 1) To assess the state of training in the use of ultraviolet phototherapy for the treatment of photo-responsive dermatoses within Dermatology residency training programs in the United States.
- 2) To develop a training course in the usage of phototherapy that would be beneficial to Dermatology residents.

### METHODS

We designed a brief survey that was distributed to residency program directors at accredited Dermatology training programs in the US.

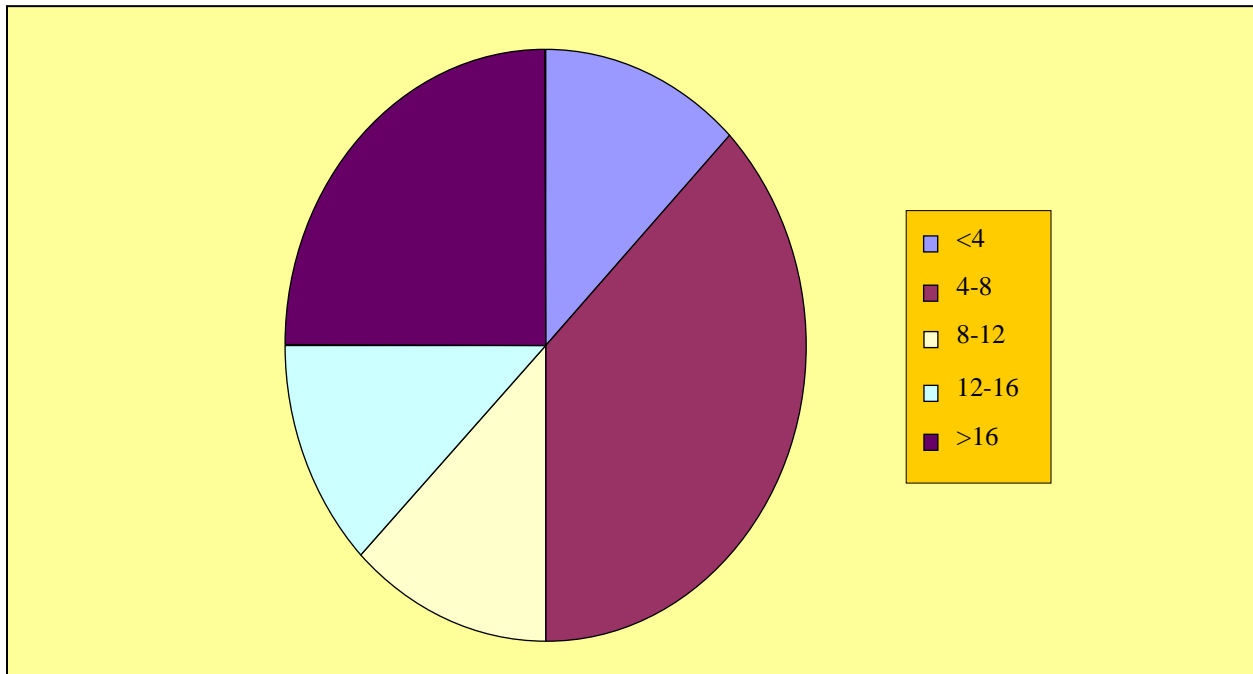
## RESULTS

Preliminary results are presented based on 8 completed surveys.

### *Key Findings*

- All responding programs offer some form of phototherapy and train residents in the use and prescription of phototherapy.
- PUVA and Narrow-Band UVB are most commonly available.
- Other forms of phototherapy offered include localized hand/foot NBUVB & PUVA and photodynamic therapy (PDT).
- The mean number of educational hours devoted to phototherapy over the 3 years of residency is about 8 (mean, 8; median, 4-8).
- Residents infrequently prescribe home phototherapy
- All responding program directors reported that additional resident training in phototherapy would be beneficial

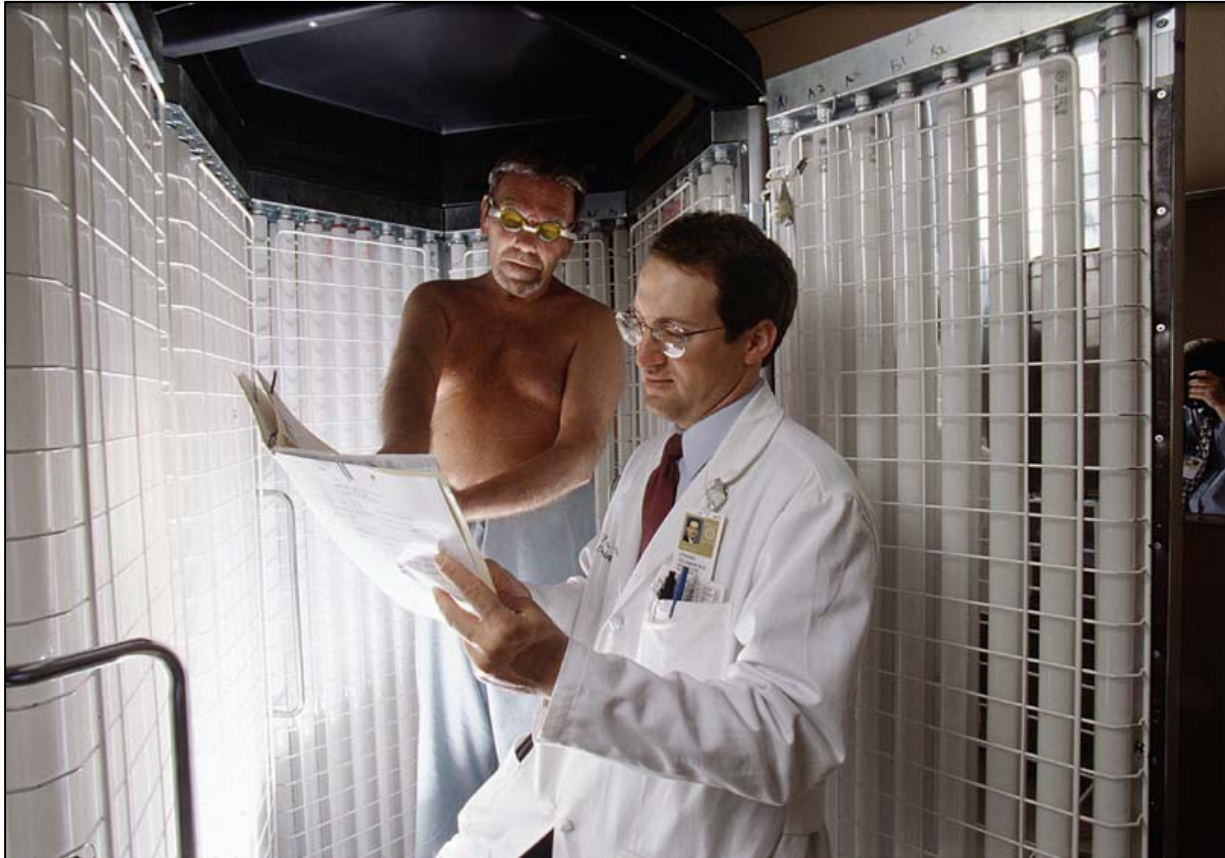
**FIGURE 1: TRAINING HOURS DEVOTED TO PHOTOTHERAPY**



## DISCUSSION

Phototherapy is an important treatment modality in the dermatologist's armamentarium. These preliminary findings suggest that, although phototherapy is offered at most academic dermatology centers, resident exposure to phototherapy may be limited. Respondents' comments included concerns about insurance coverage for home phototherapy and resident comfort with phototherapy use.

**FIGURE 2: PHOTOTHERAPY IS AN IMPORTANT TREATMENT MODALITY FOR DERMATOLOGISTS**



A successful phototherapy training program should include the following:

- Explanation and demonstration of the various means of phototherapy delivery, including, but not limited to broad and narrow band UVB, PUVA, high output laser and light devices, and home phototherapy units.
- A thorough understanding of the potential benefits and drawbacks of each device type, including discussion of light spectra, radiation dose, coverage area, adverse events, and cost of ownership/use.
- The value of an experienced phototherapist.
- Special concerns regarding home phototherapy.

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