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Physician Spotlight

Erin Reid, MD, MPH

By JENNIFER CULP

Currently in her first year of practice at Dermatology Associates in Kingsport, Erin Reid, MD, is never bored. Reid was initially attracted to the field of dermatology because of its variety and complexity.

"You get to basically do medicine, pathology, and surgery in dermatology, and that's what I liked about it," she explained.

Additionally, the specialty allows Reid to see patients of all ages and treat a wide range of problems, everything from life-threatening skin cancers to social life-threatening teenage acne.

"Many of the patient problems are limited to the skin, but an interesting thing with dermatology is that you also see a lot of internal problems that manifest on the skin. A lot of times people think that we just treat acne, but we actually get to see a lot of interesting diseases," she said.

No skin problem, however, is trivial to Reid. "Things like acne and most rashes and skin cancers are not necessarily life-threatening," she acknowledged, "but they do affect quality of life, which is important."

Reid was born and raised in Williamsburg, Kentucky, about an hour north of Knoxville on the Tennessee/Kentucky border, and chose to attend undergraduate and medical school in her home state. After completing a double major in German and biology at the University of Louisville (and spending two extended periods practicing her language skills in Germany itself), she relocated to Lexington for med-



ical school, where she earned a joint medical degree and Master's degree in public health with a concentration in epidemiology from the University of Kentucky (and she is still a die-hard UK Wildcats fan).

Following graduation from UK, she was accepted into the residency program at Southern Illinois School of Medicine, and in June 2012, completed a fellowship in Mohs micrographic surgery. The American College of Mohs Surgery (ACMS) fellows are only admitted to the program after completing a highly competitive review and selection process. Fellowship graduates are required to complete at least 500 cases of varying complexity over months of training under the supervision of an experienced, ACMS-approved Mohs surgeon in order to finish the program. Along with Chad Thomas,

MD, Reid is now one of two ACMS fellowship-trained Mohs surgeons on staff at Dermatology Associates.

Mohs surgery (also known as Mohs chemosurgery, Mohs microscopically controlled surgery, and Mohs micrographic surgery) was developed by Dr. Frederic Mohs in 1938 and has undergone further modification and refinement over the years since. The procedure is most often used to treat basal cell carcinomas and squamous cell carcinomas on highly visible, cosmetically sensitive areas such as the head and neck. The procedure spares as much healthy skin as possible, while ensuring that all cancerous tissue is removed. After each removal of tissue, the specimen is examined for cancer cells, which helps the surgeon determine where to remove tissue next and allows for a high cure rate and narrow surgical margin. The surgery is done in-office under local anesthesia while the patient remains awake. In fact, the patient may even read, knit, or carry on a conversation while waiting on tissue to be processed. Reid spends two days each week practicing general dermatology and two days performing Mohs surgery, and cites the time she spends with Mohs patients as one of her favorite parts of the job. "I enjoy getting to meet all the different patients," she said. "Mohs surgery takes place over the course of the day and the patients are awake during their surgery, so usually we have a nice conversation while I'm repairing the tissue. On Mohs days, I get to interact a little bit more with people and get to know the patients better that way."

Other problems Reid commonly sees include acne, eczema, psoriasis, autoimmune diseases such as lupus, and, of course, skin cancers. "Most skin cancers are caused by sun damage, and a lot of them (like basal cell skin cancers and squamous cell skin cancers) are easy to treat if you catch them early," she said, continuing, "It's when they're left on the skin for a long time that they become more difficult to treat."

"One of the types of skin cancer we really worry about is melanoma, which we're seeing more and more of. If you catch it early enough, it's actually very treatable, but if it goes undiagnosed too long it can be fatal," she explained.

Skin checks help catch cancers early, before the problem becomes life-threatening.

Reid is settling into her Tennessee home after joining Dermatology Associates in September 2012. "In the future, I'd like to get more involved with the community," she said.

She loves to read, and is a member of a local book club in the area. Reid has a 20-month-old daughter, Juliet, with her husband Josh, who teaches English at East Tennessee State University, and the couple is currently preparing to expand their family further. "I have another baby on the way in August, so I don't want to make too many plans beyond that!" she laughed.

Reid is passionate about dermatology, but her greatest joy comes from spending time with her loved ones. "I'm very focused on my job," she said, "but also on raising a family."



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