# The Skin and Its Diseases

A subject collection from Cold Spring Harbor Perspectives in Medicine

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A subject collection from Cold Spring Harbor Perspectives in Medicine

Edited by

Anthony E. Oro Stanford University School of Medicine

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#### The Skin and Its Diseases

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*Front cover artwork:* Mouse tail epidermal whole-mount labeled with antibodies to keratin 14 (red) and the androgen receptor (green). (Image kindly provided by Kai Kretzschmar and Fiona Watt, King's College London.)

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### Preface

The ITALIAN PHILOLOGIST AND PHYSICIAN Geronimo Mercuriali published the first textbook on skin and its diseases in 1572. Today, however, we are at a nexus in modern biology where we possess unparalleled understanding of the molecular and genetic basis of skin homeostasis and worldwide access to patients and animal models with which to correlate our knowledge and develop therapies for human diseases. This nexus means that laboratory experiments are having a greater direct impact on clinical practice than ever before. Our motivation for publishing *The Skin and Its Diseases* is our belief that the skin is the quintessential model vertebrate tissue. We feel that this compendium of current knowledge is useful for both further studies of the skin itself and insights into related changes in other tissues. Our hope is that this book will catalyze such interactions and stimulate further research in basic science and clinical/translational medicine.

We are well aware that this research topic is enormous and have endeavored to assemble a representative slice of our current knowledge. Although it does not do justice to some emerging and welldeveloped areas and lacks contributions from certain leaders in the field, the diversity of knowledge in this compendium will whet your appetite for exploring deeper.

The chapters in the book are organized around the major cell types in the skin and the diseases that affect them, including epidermis, dermis, and cutaneous epithelial specializations such as the touch receptor. The topics range from traditional dermatologic strongholds, such as psoriasis and cutaneous oncology, to newer approaches, such as the use of embryonic-stem-cell-based therapies. The content in each chapter may not completely align with that in other chapters. We have purposely given freedom to each author to review the field as they see fit. We feel that the apparent areas of conflict provide motivation for additional experimentation.

We thank Barbara Acosta and her colleagues at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press for their support. Barbara's expertise in helping us put the book together and her patience with the inevitable delays are greatly appreciated. We thank our families for putting up with us as we assembled this reference. We would like to especially thank past and current members of the cutaneous biology community for their conversations, critiques, and insights that have spurred us to investigation. We feel fortunate to have such wonderful colleagues and hope that this book will motivate readers to contribute to new understanding of the skin and its diseases.

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