Shifting the care paradigm for individuals with skin of color (SOC) in the United States (US): A comprehensive review of care gaps and emerging initiatives in dermatology

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BACKGROUND

Historically, dermatology research and clinical practices have overlooked important considerations in the care of individuals with skin of color (SOC).¹,² The ongoing disparities in dermatological care and increasing proportion of non-White individuals in the United States (US) underscores the need to understand and address existing care gaps through targeted initiatives.³,⁴ With continuous efforts, the dermatological medical community seeks to shift towards a more equitable, patient-centered model of care that considers the distinct needs of racial and ethnic groups across the US.⁵,⁶

METHODOLOGY

To provide an updated literature search with publications from April 2022 to October 2023, that offers insights into new versus persisting care gaps in dermatology for individuals with SOC and detects if any gaps have closed since our previous search. We also reviewed past and present initiatives in the dermatological care of patients with SOC to identify where current efforts are focused and if there are opportunities for improvement.

OBJECTIVE

- To identify previously published care gaps as persistent issues in the dermatological care of patients with SOC, but a new care gap has since emerged due to developments in artificial intelligence (AI)-based diagnostic tools in the field of dermatology. There was a significant rise in SOC-related dermatological initiatives, with the largest increases in healthcare professional (HCP) medical education (MedEd) curricula and SOC research. However, opportunities still exist in HCP communication and access to treatment, where there continues to be limited activity. The present study provides a crucial overview of both progress and shortcomings in the SOC-related dermatological landscape and highlights that a coordinated approach may be needed to create impactful change and address the dermatological care gaps of patients with SOC.

CONCLUSION

- We identified emerging initiatives in dermatological care of SOC using titles and abstracts from English-language articles and grey literature, including conference proceedings, expert interviews, and social media platforms. The final search included 327 unique publications across a wide range of topics, from diagnostic tools to patient education. The results were categorized into five key areas: Access to care, Care in the dermatology clinic, Patient experience, Research, and Education. The summary map visually represents the findings, highlighting areas where further action is needed.

RESULTS – SOC-RELATED DERMATOLOGY INITIATIVES IN PLACE TO ADDRESS THE 18 LITERATURE-IDENTIFIED CARE GAPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Care Gap Type</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Initiatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>HCPs, Researchers, Patients</td>
<td>Many initiatives (45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to care</td>
<td>Dermatologists, Physicians, Patients</td>
<td>Very few initiatives (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity in dermatology clinic</td>
<td>Dermatologists, Physicians, Patients</td>
<td>Very few initiatives (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC-related education</td>
<td>HCPs, Researchers</td>
<td>Many initiatives (45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC-related research</td>
<td>HCPs, Researchers, Patients</td>
<td>Many initiatives (45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Heating Legend

- Many initiatives (45)
- Few initiatives (0)
- No (0)

Change in color since 2022 scan

- Life lessons (peer review, self-care, team training)

SUMMARY

This comprehensive review of the literature and initiatives highlights the ongoing challenges in dermatological care for individuals with SOC and points towards the need for continued investments in education, research, and practical solutions to bridge the care gaps. As the medical community continues to evolve, it is essential to ensure that all individuals, regardless of skin color, receive equitable and effective care.

REFERENCES


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