

History of the Division of Dermatology, Johannesburg Hospital

On November 5th this year the Johannesburg Hospital will be celebrating its 100-year inception. Dr J Frootko offers this interesting historical account of the establishment of the Dermatological Department of the hospital.

At the turn of the century the population of Johannesburg was approximately 10 000 souls. Hospital services required to be extended and in 1904 the General Hospital on Hospital Hill was officially opened. Dr Ronald McKenzie, at the time district surgeon of Johannesburg, was appointed as the honorary consultant in charge of skin diseases. In 1910 he was appointed honorary visiting dermatologist. He retired in 1928 to practice in Johannesburg privately and in 1929 was appointed the first honorary consultant dermatologist to the Johannesburg Hospital complex. He died in September 1930.

From the inception of the Johannesburg Hospital, skin cases were treated by the Hospital Board's appointed part-time honorary staff and by the full time resident staff. With the establishment of the Medical School in 1921 and Johannesburg's population influx after the 1914-18 war, additional dermatological services were provided by part time honorary appointments

from local practitioners.

The Department of Medicine assumed departmental status in 1922 with the appointment of Dr O K Williamson as full time Professor of Medicine in the newly established Medical School of the Witwatersrand University. The division of dermatology of the department now became responsible both for patient care and undergraduate teaching of skin diseases, and so a three-way exchange for the improvement of dermatological services was established between the University, the Hospital and practitioners of Johannesburg in private practice.

In 1925, the Non-European Hospital to serve the needs of the African, Coloured and Asian population was opened in Hospital Street, adjacent to the Medical School. Dr Ivor Gluckman was appointed as the honorary clinical assistant to Dr R P Mackenzie in 1925, and in 1929 with Dr McKenzie's retirement was appointed as honorary dermatologist to the Skin Department.

*Facade of the
Johannesburg
Hospital circa 1893*



It consisted at the time of 2 Outpatients Clinics and a few inpatient beds at the Otto Beit convalescent Hospital. Dr Ivor Gluckman is still in practice in Johannesburg, in spite of his mature years.

In 1930 Dr H Evans, and in 1936 Dr T A du Toit, were appointed honorary part-time assistant dermatologists. In the immediate pre- and post 1939 - 45 war years, the department had some 15 beds at Otto Beit Convalescent Hospital, and later at the Colin Gordon Hospital in Esselen Street, adjoining the Medical School, in addition to its responsibility for the Outpatient Clinics at the General and the Non European Hospitals. At that time many skin diseases required hospitalisation. Skin care was mainly topical and nursing care orientated and these beds were always occupied with conditions such as the serious blistering diseases, the genodermatoses, skin tuberculosis, fungal diseases such as muco-cutaneous candidiasis, kaposi sarcoma, chromoblastomycoses, and other conditions. It was only in the middle 50's and 60's with the advance and use of antibiotics and steroids that the therapeutic pattern changed to systemic and local care. Skin disease management became predominantly an ambulatory type of care.

In the late 30's, and during the war, the staff of the department was: Dr Ivor Gluckman, Dr H Evans and Dr E Binion. These were part-time honorary appointments. In 1946 Dr Max Rose was appointed full-time dermatologist to the Baragwanath Hospital teaching complex. In 1947 the part time honorary staff at the General Hospital consisted of Drs I Gluckman, H Evans, S Gordon and L J A Loewenthal. In the middle 60's Dr L J A Loewenthal retired from practice to live in Spain; he returned to die in South Africa in the late 1980's.

In 1950, following the Pentz Report on Hospitalisation, the Transvaal Province eliminated the honorary system. All appointments in the Department became dual appointments on a part-time sessional or full time paid basis. The Province became responsible for patient care and hospital administration, and the Medical School for care of the sick, and for undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and research.

In 1950 the staff of the Department was as follows:

- Part time Chief* — Dr I Gluckman
- Full time dermatologist to Baragwanath Hospital* — Dr M Rose;
- Assistant part-time dermatologist* — Dr H Evans
- First Assistant part-time dermatologist* — Dr L J A Loewenthal
- Second Assistant part-time dermatologist* — Drs A Robins, E. Binions, M Chitters and S Gordon.

In 1955 Drs G Lee and L S Tatz were appointed as second assistant dermatologists. A full-time medical registrar, Dr A Pienaar, was seconded to assist in the skin department.

In 1959 Dr Max Chitters retired, and I was

appointed to the department.

In 1964 the staff consisted of Drs I Gluckman as Chief dermatologist, M Rose as full-time dermatologist at Baragwanath hospital, S Gordon, John Cowley, R Targowsky and I as part-time consultants, and Dr M A Sher was appointed as registrar to the department.

In 1966 Dr I Gluckman retired. Dr S Gordon was appointed Chief part-time dermatologist and Drs John Cowley, I Targowsky and I served as part-time dermatologist with Dr M A Sher as registrar.

Dr S Gordon was responsible for organising weekly clinical meetings in the department. Until then the departmental activities were mainly that of patient care and undergraduate teaching with very little postgraduate teaching. Dr S Gordon died at the age of 62 years in 1967.

In 1967 I was appointed part-time principal dermatologist with Drs J Cowley, P Gordon Smith, S Bor and I Targowsky, and later Mary Ann Sher as part-time consultant dermatologists. Dr Saul Issroff was appointed first full-time registrar.



Dr Ronald McKenzie, Johannesburg's first appointed dermatologist.

Weekly clinical meetings were organised with emphasis on cutaneous histopathology and lectures and demonstrations in the basic sciences in relationship to dermatology.

Dr Peter Gordon-Smith was a great help in organising a physical home for the department, in a flat in Ursula Mansions where the registrars could read and relax and study.

In 1968, together with Professor Lemmer of the Dental Department, an Outpatients Clinic was organised at the N.E.H. for postgraduate dental students requiring further experience in oral pathology.

In 1968 a 2-day course in Dermatology for general practitioners was organised with the staff participating in lectures and demonstrations. 50 general practitioners from all over the Transvaal attended this course. It was intended to hold this course every 2 years, but unfortunately it did not materialise. It was impossible to organise further courses without secretarial and administrative help. My memos thereafter to the Head of the Department of Medicine were that, if the skin division of the department were to become meaningful, it would require a full time head. Only then would it be

possible to develop a measure of autonomy for the adequate organising of undergraduate, post-graduate and research programmes.

In 1968 Dr Max Rose died, and Dr Dogliotti was appointed full-time Head to the department at Baragwanath Hospital. In 1969 Drs David Whiting and M A Sher joined the department, and in December 1972 I retired as Head of the Dermatology division and have remained in practice in Johannesburg. In 1973 I was appointed as Honorary Consultant Dermatologist to the Johannesburg Hospital complex, by the then Director of the Transvaal Department of Hospital Services. The staff, apart from the part-time dermatologists now had 4 full-time registrars, namely Drs I Caro, J Tolkin, D Hartdegan and E von Varendorff. In 1973 Dr D Whiting was appointed Chief dermatologist with Dr P Gordon-Smith, Dr M A Sher, Dr Peter Mars, Dr S Issroff and Dr J Dove on the part-time staff, and Dr Dogliotto full-time at the Baragwanath hospital.

In 1980 Dr M A Sher took over as principal dermatologist and Dr David Presbury was appointed to the staff. In 1981 Drs Goldberg, Tolkin, Caro, Hartdegan and M Liebowitz were also appointed as registrars.

In 1986 a full-time appointment was made with professorial status, and Associate Professor E J Schulz became Chief of Dermatology. The Division of Dermatology has a physical home in the Department of Medicine at the Hospital and is autonomous in all aspects of patient care, undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and research. Today there are 7 registrars, 3 employed in the Johannesburg Hospital - Hillbrow Hospital complex and 4 serving Baragwanath, Coronation and J G Strydom Hospitals. However, there is a regular rotation of all the registrars between the hospitals. A feature of the postgraduate training is combined bi-weekly meetings of all registrars, and the 10-head microscope where diagnosis and management of all patients who have undergone biopsies are discussed. This affords an excellent opportunity for all to meet and exchange ideas and discuss problems of all types.

APPENDAGE I

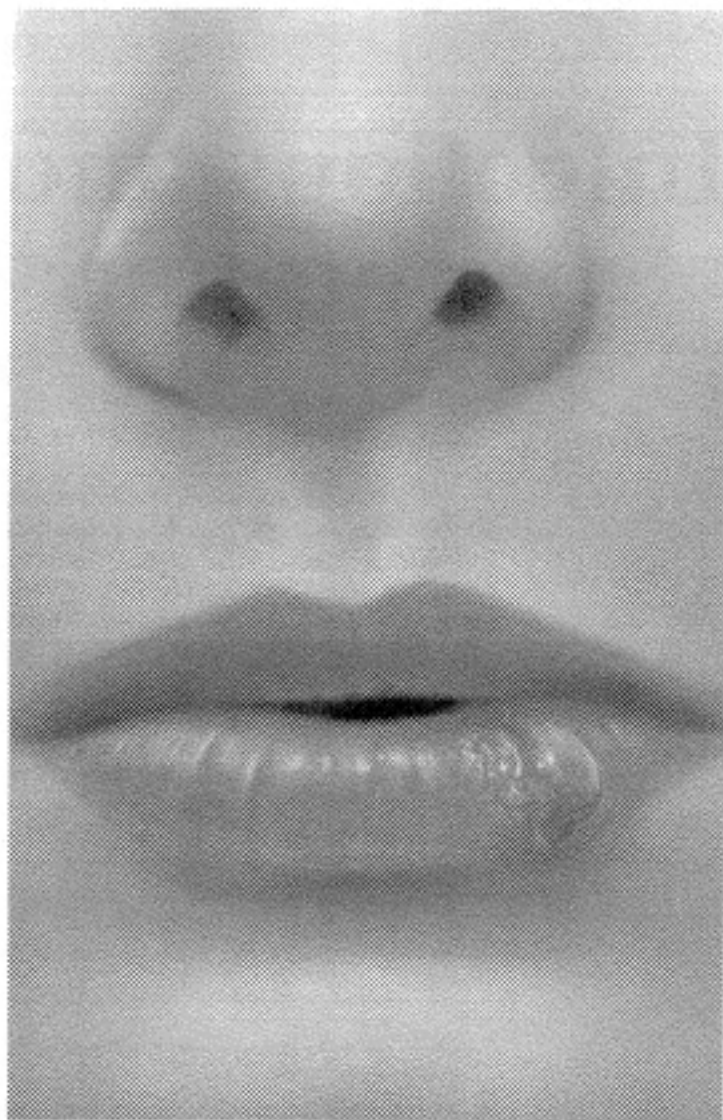
Facilities available for the teaching of dermatology to undergraduates, postgraduates and those practitioners interested in dermatology.

Dermatology Clinics at:

- ★ Johannesburg Hospital
- ★ Hillbrow Hospital
- ★ Baragwanath Hospital
- ★ Coronation Hospital
- ★ J G Strydom Hospital
- ★ Alexandra Clinic

Dermatology meetings:

- ★ Clinical meetings every Wednesday morning at Johannesburg Hospital Seminar room.
- ★ Dermatopathology meetings in conjunction with Pathology Department on alternate Tuesday mornings. *Continued over page.*



Ignore a cold sore for long enough,
and it comes back again...