



### **Jan-Feb 2024 Residency Times**

Faculty Spotlight: Meena Moossavi, MD

*Clinical Assistant Professor, WSUSOM Dept. of Dermatology*

*John Dingell Veterans Administration Center, Detroit*

#### **Residency Times: Where did you grow up, and when did you become interested in medicine as a career?**

**Meena Moossavi:** I was born at Hutzel Hospital in Detroit while my father was completing his residency in general surgery at the Detroit Medical Center. He went to medical school in Iran and came to Detroit to do his graduate medical training, first in general surgery and then a hand surgery fellowship. After receiving my high school degree from Detroit Country Day School, I attended Kalamazoo College for my undergraduate degree, majoring in biology. I was inspired to pursue in a career in medicine because of my father.

#### **RT: Where did you receive your medical degree and complete your graduate medical education?**

**MM:** I received my medical degree from the University of Michigan. At that time, I thought that I wanted to become a plastic surgeon. I matched into an integrated plastic surgery residency at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City and completed two years of surgical training. However, I realized that dermatology suited my skills and interests more than surgery, and subsequently I was lucky enough to match in dermatology residency at Wayne State University. While waiting to begin my dermatology residency here in WSUSOM, I spent a year at Columbia University as a clinical research fellow involved in dermatology clinical trials.

Dermatology interested me because of the visual aspects of the specialty, which includes clinical morphology, dermoscopy, direct microscopy, and dermatopathology. I especially enjoy the mental challenge of observation, deduction, and differential diagnosis that is similar to the detective work of Sherlock Holmes.

I find working at the Detroit Veterans' Administration as Section Chief of Dermatology very fulfilling, since I'm helping veterans, and also teaching Wayne State University residents and medical students. Both the city of Detroit and WSU have so much to offer. I can't imagine being anywhere else. Of course, I am biased towards Wayne State University and the dermatology department, since I met my husband while we were residents together in the program.

#### **RT: Tell us about your current research interests.**

**MM:** My research interests are derived from my work at the Detroit VA and the patient population that I encounter there. My publications include skin cancer in skin of color patients, veteran dermatology issues, inpatient dermatology, serious drug eruptions, and surgical pearls, among other topics.

**RT:** In past several years, the Dermatology residency program has established an impressive research record. Can you share any advice or insights for faculty or residents who'd like to achieve the same?

**MM:** Mentorship of medical students and residents is an important part of research productivity, so our dermatology department instituted a structured mentorship program for our residents and medical students. It is very rewarding to work with medical learners to guide them in writing and publishing research papers, preparing poster presentations, and oral presentations. I believe that persistence is very important. If a manuscript is rejected, there is still an opportunity to revise it and resubmit to another journal.

One article that I am particularly proud of is "[Analysis of inpatient dermatology consultations in a veterans affairs hospital](#)," published in the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology* in July of 2021. I worked with a wonderful WSU medical student (Katherine Hoopes) and dermatology resident (Reema Habra) for this project. The data that we derived from our chart review help to put a spotlight on the veteran patient population and how their inpatient dermatology issues differ from the general population.

**RT:** During residency (and perhaps even now), were there wellness activities that were especially useful to you?

**MM:** During residency, I would go to the gym regularly for exercise. Now that I am busy attending, I try to incorporate regular exercise, stretching, and meditation to cope with stress. I also find that drinking green tea on a daily basis is calming and, as a bonus, a healthy habit.

**RT:** Congratulations on being accepted into Wayne State's WE AIM (Wayne State Empowerment for Academicians in Medicine) program? Can you tell us a little more about WE AIM?

**MM:** I learned about the WE AIM program from Darius Mehregan, the chair of our department, and soon as I read more about it, I knew it would be helpful for me to progress in my academic career. WE AIM is geared towards underrepresented individuals in medicine who are mid-career. We attend seven monthly meetings across the academic year, centered around speakers and topics geared towards career development and support for the promotion and tenure process. One of the many great aspects of WE AIM is the incredible list of assigned reading. I highly recommend *Crucial Conversations* by Joseph Grenny and others (McGraw, 2021) a very helpful guide to conducting difficult business and personal conversations.

**RT:** Are there nonmedical books you might recommend?

**MM:** A personal favorite is *Eat That Frog!* by Brian Tracy (Berrett-Koehler, 2017), a short book that I'd recommend for anyone who is affected by procrastination. Also, I love science fiction and fantasy: *The Worm Ouroboros* by E. R. Eddison is another favorite. It was first published in 1922 and influenced all the later fantasy sagas.