

AN INTERNATIONAL ECZEMA COUNCIL SYMPOSIUM AT THE  
2026 SOCIETY FOR INVESTIGATIVE DERMATOLOGY ANNUAL MEETING

# DECODING THE DIALOGUE

## Skin-Microbe-Immune Interactions in Atopic Dermatitis

Hilton Chicago  
Continental Room A, Lobby Level  
Chicago, IL, USA



Monday, May 13, 2026  
8 am-Noon CDT



INTERNATIONAL  
ECZEMA COUNCIL

# AGENDA

**8–8:10 am**

## Welcome from the IEC

Lawrence F. Eichenfield, MD

IEC President-Elect

Rady Children's Hospital San Diego | San Diego, CA, USA

**8:10–8:15 am**

## Program Overview

April Armstrong, MD MPH

IEC Director

University of California Los Angeles | Los Angeles, CA, USA

Patrick Brunner, MD MSc

IEC Councilor

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai | New York, NY, USA

**8:15–8:45 am**

## When the Wall Breaks: Barrier Defects as the First Step Toward Infection in Atopic Dermatitis

*Structural barrier dysfunction (filaggrin, lipids, epithelial stress responses) as the initiating event enabling microbial invasion*

Teruaki Nakatsuji, PhD

University of California San Diego | San Diego, CA USA

**8:45–9:15 am**

## Life on the Skin: How the Atopic Dermatitis Microbiome Shapes Host Defense

*Human skin microbiome ecology in atopic dermatitis—strain dominance, dysbiosis, and recovery with therapy*

Zeyang Shen, PhD

Washington State University | Pullman, WA, USA

**9:15–9:45 am**

## When Defense Fails: Innate Immune Defects, Infection Risk, and Microbiome-Targeted Therapeutic Strategies in Atopic Dermatitis

*Cutaneous innate immune dysfunction in atopic dermatitis, including impaired antimicrobial peptide responses, altered host-microbe interactions, susceptibility to bacterial and viral skin infections, and emerging strategies to restore host defense through microbiome-based and microbiome-modulating therapies*

Richard L. Gallo, MD PhD FAAD FRCP

President, Society for Investigative Dermatology

University of California San Diego | San Diego, CA, USA

**9:45–10 am**

Break

**10–10:30 am**

## Type 2 Immunity Turns Off the Alarm: Cytokine Programs That Suppress Antimicrobial Defense

*Th2 cytokine-mediated suppression of antimicrobial peptides and innate immune responses in skin with atopic dermatitis*

Michael D. Howell, PhD

Mountaineer Biosciences | San Diego, CA, USA

**10:30–11 am**

## Not All Atopic Dermatitis Is the Same: Immune Endotypes and Molecular Risk Profiles

*Tissue-level immune heterogeneity, biomarkers, and differential susceptibility to infection*

Patrick Brunner, MD MSc

IEC Councilor

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai | New York, NY, USA

**11–11:30 am**

## From Trials to Practice: Infection Risk Across Atopic Dermatitis Therapies

*Comparative evidence on infection risk across AD therapeutic classes, integrating clinical trial and real-world data*

April Armstrong, MD MPH

IEC Director

University of California Los Angeles | Los Angeles, CA, USA

**11:30 am–Noon**

## Flash Talks: SID Abstracts

**11:30–11:40 am**

### FLASH TALK 1

#### Integrated Epidermal Microbial and Spatial Transcriptomic Profiling Reveals *Staphylococcus aureus*-Associated Keratinocyte Programs in Erythrodermic Skin Disease

Eleanor Bethany Ostroff, BA

Katie De Jong, BSA

Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine | Chicago, IL, USA

**11:40–11:50 am**

### FLASH TALK 2

#### Transcriptomic Profiling of Psoriasis and Atopic Dermatitis Using a Non-Invasive Dermal Patch Sampling Platform

Tobin J. Dickerson, PhD

Mindera Health | Vista, CA, USA

**11:50 am–Noon**

### FLASH TALK 3

#### Compartment-Specific Transcriptional Profiling Defines Two Distinct Subgroups in Atopic Dermatitis-Psoriasis Overlap Phenotypes

Jongeeun Lee, MD

The Rockefeller University | New York, NY, USA

**Noon**

## Concluding Remarks & QR Code Session Evaluation

April Armstrong, MD MPH

Patrick Brunner, MD MSc

# FACULTY

**Lawrence F. Eichenfield, MD**  
IEC President-Elect



**Lawrence Eichenfield** is chief of pediatric and adolescent dermatology at Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego in San Diego, CA, USA, and the vice chair of the department of dermatology and professor of dermatology and pediatrics at the University of California San Diego (UCSD) School of Medicine in San Diego, CA, USA.

His clinical interests include atopic dermatitis, acne, psoriasis, vascular lesions including port wine stains and hemangiomas, neonatal dermatology, laser surgery, nevi, and skin signs of systemic disease. He has authored more than 400 journal articles, chapters, abstracts, and books on these topics and has served as the senior editor of *Neonatal and Infant Dermatology* and *The Eczemas*. He served as editor-in-chief of *Pediatric Dermatology* for 12 years and serves on the editorial boards of multiple journals and periodicals.

He has received extensive honors and served in various leadership capacities for the Society for Pediatric Dermatology, American Academy of Dermatology, American Acne and Rosacea Society, and Pediatric Dermatology Research Alliance (PeDRA).

Dr. Eichenfield received his medical degree from Mount Sinai School of Medicine, was a pediatric resident and chief resident at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and completed his dermatology residency at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.

**April Armstrong, MD MPH**  
IEC Director &  
Program Co-Chair



**April Armstrong** is professor and chief of dermatology at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) in Los Angeles, CA, USA.

An internationally renowned dermatologist and clinical researcher in inflammatory skin diseases, including atopic dermatitis and psoriasis, she has conducted more than 150 clinical trials and published more than 600 articles in scientific journals.

Dr. Armstrong is also a passionate educator, having received numerous awards for her educational efforts.

Dr. Armstrong has a long history of service to the medical profession on a national and international level. Her leadership roles over time include serving as a board member of the International Eczema Council, board member of the American Academy of Dermatology, chair of the Medical Board at the National Psoriasis Foundation, co-president of the Group for Research and Assessment of Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis (GRAPPA), president of American DermatoEpidemiology Network, editorial board member of *JAMA Dermatology* and *JAAD*, councilor for the International Psoriasis Council, and a board member for the International Dermatology Outcome Measures (IDEOM). In California, she serves on the board of the California Society of Dermatology and Dermatological Surgery (CalDerm) and was president of the Sacramento Valley Dermatological Society.

Dr. Armstrong obtained her medical degree from Harvard Medical School in Boston, MA, USA, and completed dermatology residency at the Harvard Combined Dermatology Residency Program. She obtained a Master of Public Health degree from Harvard School of Public Health. Prior to working at UCLA, she served as associate dean for clinical research at the University of Southern California (USC).

**Patrick M. Brunner, MD MSc**  
IEC Councilor &  
Program Co-Chair



**Patrick Brunner** is the associate professor of dermatology and director of the Cutaneous Lymphoma Clinic in the Kimberly and Eric J. Waldman Department of Dermatology at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City, NY, USA. He is a clinician scientist with a strong interest in skin immunology.

Dr. Brunner sees patients suffering from chronic inflammatory skin diseases such as atopic dermatitis (eczema) and vitiligo, as well as primary cutaneous immune cell malignancies. He also heads a translational research group aimed at developing a better understanding of the immunobiology in cutaneous lymphomas, atopic dermatitis, and vitiligo and better treatment modalities for this patient population.

Dr. Brunner obtained his MD degree from the Medical University of Vienna, Austria. He completed his residency in dermatology at the Department of Dermatology at the Medical University of Vienna (General Hospital Vienna) under the mentorship of Dr. Georg Stingl. He then joined the Laboratory for Investigative Dermatology at The Rockefeller University in New York, obtaining a master's degree in clinical and translational sciences, and performed research on atopic dermatitis under the mentorship of Drs. Emma Guttman and James G. Krueger.

In 2018, he returned to Vienna to build a research group focusing on cutaneous immunobiology of chronic inflammatory skin diseases and primary cutaneous lymphomas, to better understand how individual immune cells orchestrate skin inflammation in benign and malignant conditions. In 2021, he joined the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in his current role.

# FACULTY

**Richard L. Gallo,  
MD PhD FAAD FRCP  
SID President**



**Richard Gallo** is the Irma Gigli Endowed Chair, distinguished professor, and founding chair of the Department of Dermatology at the University of California San Diego in San Diego, CA, USA. He also is president of the Society for Investigative Dermatology. He is a leading physician scientist in the fields of dermatology, immunology, epithelial biology and microbiology.

His groundbreaking research discovered the existence of antimicrobial peptides in mammalian skin, a field that has now grown to be seen as a major part of clinical medicine. His work has revolutionized our knowledge of the function of the skin microbiome, with many research breakthroughs that have greatly advanced understanding of several human skin diseases including atopic dermatitis, rosacea, and acne.

Dr. Gallo has received major awards from the Society of Investigative Dermatology, the Japanese Society of Investigative Dermatology, the European Societies of Investigative Dermatology, and other scientific organizations within and outside the field of dermatology. He has been elected as a fellow of multiple prestigious societies including the National Academy of Medicine (2023), American Association for the Advancement of Science (2017), the American Association of Microbiology (2014), and the American Society of Clinical Investigation (2003).

Dr. Gallo is one of the highest cited active investigators (h-index 143), with more than 75,000 citations from more than 450 publications in prestigious journals including Nature, Science, The New England Journal of Medicine, Immunity, Cell, and others.

He completed his dermatology residency and fellowship training at Harvard Medical School.

**Michael D. Howell, PhD**



**Michael Howell** is an accomplished immunologist and biotechnology leader with more than 25 years of experience driving innovation in drug discovery, precision medicine, and clinical development.

He is the founder and president of Mountaineer Biosciences, Inc., cofounder of Galileo Biosystems, and a trusted scientific advisor to multiple biotechnology startups and venture firms.

Throughout his career, he has built and led high-performing teams responsible for advancing groundbreaking therapies and diagnostics, with a consistent focus on translating immunologic insights into transformative patient care. His leadership has contributed directly to the approval of multiple therapies—including Opzelura® (ruxolitinib), Jakafi® (ruxolitinib), Adbry®/Adtralza® (tralokinumab), Tezspire® (tezepelumab), and Spevigo® (spesolimab)—as well as to novel biomarker and precision medicine strategies.

He is the author of more than 65 peer-reviewed publications and inventor on patents for therapeutic interventions and biomarker approaches in immunological disorders.

Dr. Howell earned his PhD in Immunology from West Virginia University School of Medicine and completed his postdoctoral training at National Jewish Health. He began his career on the faculty at National Jewish Health and went on to hold senior R&D leadership roles at Boehringer Ingelheim, the Immune Tolerance Network, MedImmune/AstraZeneca, and Incyte. Additionally, Dr. Howell was the chief scientific officer at DermTech and ZuraBio.

**Teruaki Nakatsuji, PhD**



**Teruaki “Teru” Nakatsuji** is a microbiologist and project scientist in the Department of Dermatology at the University of California, San Diego in San Diego, CA, USA.

His research focuses on understanding how the microbial ecosystem of human skin influences health and disease.

Using a multidisciplinary approach that integrates biochemistry, molecular biology, cell biology, animal models, multi-omics, bioinformatics, and proof-of-concept clinical trials, he investigates how dysregulation of the skin microbiome contributes to barrier dysfunction, inflammation, and disease severity in atopic dermatitis, acne vulgaris, and rosacea.

Dr. Nakatsuji’s work has successfully translated fundamental discoveries in skin microbiome research into microbiome-based therapeutics now advancing in clinical trials. Through this translational research, he continues to contribute to the development of innovative therapeutic strategies leveraging beneficial bacteria derived from the human microbiome.

**Zeyang Shen, PhD**



**Zeyang Shen** is an assistant professor in the School of Molecular Biosciences at Washington State University in Pullman, WA, USA.

He is a computational biologist whose research lies at the intersection of microbiome science, genomics, bioinformatics, and machine learning.

Dr. Shen leads a research program focused on understanding how the microbiome contributes to human disease, with particular emphasis on atopic dermatitis. His research has been supported by a competitive NIH Pathway to Independence Award (K99/R00), and he is a recipient of Washington State University's President's Big Ideas Initiative award, which supports the development of an interdisciplinary precision biology platform integrating multi-omics, organoid-on-a-chip systems, and artificial intelligence.

In addition to his research, Dr. Shen is committed to training the next generation of scientists and to fostering an inclusive, collaborative research environment. He is active in scientific service and has served as an early-career editor for mBio.

Before joining Washington State University, Dr. Shen completed his postdoctoral training in the laboratory of Dr. Julie Segre at the National Human Genome Research Institute, where he studied the infant skin microbiome and its role in atopic disease. He earned his PhD from the University of California San Diego in the laboratory of Dr. Christopher Glass, where he developed computational and machine learning approaches to study gene regulation and transcription factor binding. Across these areas, his work has contributed new analytical frameworks for extracting biological insight from high-dimensional genomic data.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**At the end of the session, participants will be able to:**

- **Describe the role of epidermal barrier defects—including filaggrin insufficiency, lipid disorganization, and epithelial stress responses—in initiating microbial invasion and increasing infection risk in patients with atopic dermatitis.**
- **Evaluate how alterations in the skin microbiome, innate immune responses, and type 2 cytokine signaling contribute to susceptibility to bacterial and viral skin infections in atopic dermatitis and summarize emerging microbiome-targeted strategies to restore host defense.**
- **Assess infection risk across atopic dermatitis therapeutic classes by integrating clinical trial and real-world evidence with immune endotype and biomarker data to inform individualized treatment selection.**



# FLASH TALK PRESENTERS

## FLASH TALK PRESENTER Katie De Jong, BSA



**Katie De Jong** is a rising fourth-year medical student at Texas A&M College of Medicine in Bryan, TX, USA. She is completing a research year in the Department of Dermatology at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago, IL, USA. Her current research interests include cutaneous lymphoma and rheumatologic dermatology. She was raised in Austin, TX, and graduated from The University of Texas at Austin with a BSA in biology.

## FLASH TALK PRESENTER Tobin Dickerson, PhD



**Toby Dickerson** is cofounder and CSO of Mindera Health, a biotechnology company in San Diego, CA, USA. The firm's technology generates clinically validated data to lower costs and improve outcomes. Toby has more than 90 publications and has served as principal investigator of both government- and corporate-sponsored research from small biotech companies and major pharmaceutical firms.

His scientific expertise includes diagnostic platform development, small molecule and vaccine discovery, metabolomics, scientific algorithm and software development, phage display, and neglected tropical diseases.

His laboratory has developed technologies that allow for the prediction of protein evolution, a universal screening system for protein-ligand interactions, and a metabolomics platform for the diagnosis of infectious disease in resource-limited areas.

Toby completed his BS with high honors in chemistry from the University of Virginia in 1999 and was awarded his MA in chemistry in 2000. He matriculated to The Scripps Research Institute (TSRI) where he completed his PhD in 2004 in chemical biology.

He was promoted to TSRI faculty in 2005. There, he established a research program aimed at developing disruptive platform technologies for problems of emergent clinical significance. He joined MINDERA from TSRI, where he was an associate professor in the Department of Chemistry and the Worm Institute for Research and Medicine from 2005-2019.

## FLASH TALK PRESENTER Jongeeun Lee, MD



**Jongeeun Lee** is an instructor in clinical investigation at The Rockefeller University in New York City, NY, USA, where she is a KL2 Clinical Scholar.

Her research focuses on inflammatory skin diseases using single-cell and spatial transcriptomic approaches.

The KL2 Clinical Scholar program provides a 3-year training experience to prepare physician-scientists and select doctoral-level Ph.D. investigators for independent careers in clinical and patient-oriented translational research.

Dr. Lee received her MD from Kyungpook National University School of Medicine in South Korea and completed her residency in dermatology at Samsung Medical Center in Seoul, South Korea.

## FLASH TALK PRESENTER Eleanor Bethany Ostroff, BA



**Eleanor Ostroff** is a rising third-year medical student at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago, IL, USA. Her current research interests include cutaneous lymphoma and cutaneous metastases of visceral cancers. She was raised in the western suburbs of Chicago and graduated from the University of Chicago with a BA in chemistry.

# CORPORATE SUPPORTERS

The support of our corporate partners makes it possible for the International Eczema Council (IEC) to advance its mission of improving patient care by promoting research, education, and best practices in treatment for atopic dermatitis in people worldwide.

Learn how to join these companies in advancing the IEC mission; visit [eczemacouncil.org/corporate-membership](http://eczemacouncil.org/corporate-membership) and email CEO Alan Stiles at [astiles@eczemacouncil.org](mailto:astiles@eczemacouncil.org).

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# INTERNATIONAL ECZEMA COUNCIL

## ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL ECZEMA COUNCIL

Founded in late 2014 and led by experts in atopic dermatitis, the International Eczema Council (IEC) is a global nonprofit organization. Dermatologists and allergists from around the globe serve as Councilors and Associates, contributing their expertise to support the IEC’s research, programs, events, and education. The IEC has **187 Councilors and Associates in 38 countries**, and this group continues to grow.

**Mission:** Improve patient care by promoting research, education, and best practices in treatment for atopic dermatitis in people worldwide.

**Vision:** Transforming the lives of people with atopic dermatitis.

## CORPORATE SUPPORT

The support of our corporate partners makes it possible for the International Eczema Council (IEC) to advance its mission of improving patient care by promoting research, education, and best practices in treatment for atopic dermatitis in people worldwide. See who is supporting our mission and how you can join them at [eczemacouncil.org/corporate-membership](https://eczemacouncil.org/corporate-membership).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Save the date to attend the remaining 2026 IEC events. Go to [EczemaCouncil.org/symposia](https://eczemacouncil.org/symposia) to learn more.

Date	In Conjunction With	Location	Event
May 19	Reunión Anual de Dermatólogos Latinoamericanos (RADLA)	Buenos Aires, Argentina	Atopic Dermatitis in Adults: Diagnosis, Misdiagnosis, and Therapeutic Approaches
Sept. 9	European Society for Dermatological Research (ESDR) Annual Meeting	Heidelberg, Germany	Eczema and Psoriasis Research Incubator: Cross-Disciplinary Innovation Forum
Oct. 3 (tentative)	European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV) Congress 2026	Vienna, Austria	The Relevance of Clinical Trials and Real-World Data

[Visit the Symposia Page](https://eczemacouncil.org/symposia)

## CONNECT WITH THE IEC ON SOCIAL MEDIA



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