

The User-Generated Web-Based Dermoscopy Image Archive of the International Dermoscopy Society: A Contribution to E-Learning and Exchange of Knowledge

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Introduction

Internet databases have become an important source of medical information and have also facilitated the advancement of telemedicine – a modern application to which dermatology is exceptionally well suited [1, 2]. In recent years, blogs [3, 4], online courses and atlases as well as discussion forums in the field of dermoscopy have been established, and these discussion forums in particular are a very useful medium, not only for the exchange of knowledge via the Internet [5], but also for the collection of data for scientific studies [6, 7].

The International Dermoscopy Society (IDS) is an organization which was founded in 2003 to promote clinical research and education in dermoscopy. The society offers free membership, and it currently has more than

4,000 members from over 110 countries who can take part in the online discussion forum on the website www.dermoscopy-ids.org. The members share cases of interest with each other by entering clinical data and images as well as dermoscopic images to an input mask and pose questions pertaining to diagnosis, treatment or dermoscopic features of the lesions. The consultants of the forum then respond to the queries, and in this way all members are able to profit from their knowledge and expertise. Figure 1 depicts a case which was posted on the discussion forum.

Since the website's establishment in 2006, a vast number of cases has been uploaded and discussed, and as such cases with finalized discussions are removed from the discussion forum for clearness of arrangement. Therefore we decided to create a dermoscopy image archive to enable members to locate previous cases based on both clinical and dermoscopic criteria which are entered into an input mask (fig. 2). The arrangement was developed with the goal of offering an additional source of dermoscopic images and expanding the value of the forum as an educational tool in dermoscopy.

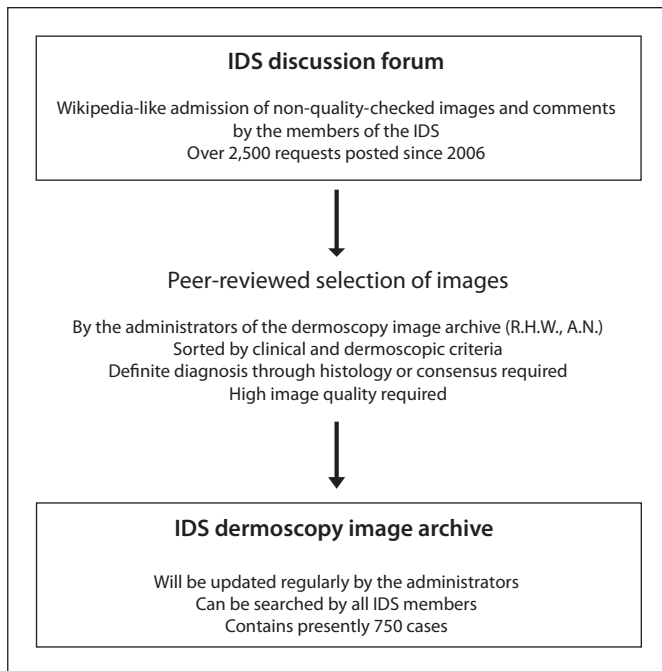


Fig. 3. Demonstration of the selection process of cases from the IDS discussion forum for the IDS dermoscopy image archive.

share them with the community to promote the knowledge of the clinical and dermoscopic appearance of rare lesions like Merkel cell carcinomas or tumours of the sweat glands.

It has previously been demonstrated [1] that open-access teledermatology may serve as a successful platform [9, 10] for challenging dermoscopic cases, where advice on diagnosis and therapy can be provided. This is emphasized by the fact that past studies have shown a high diagnostic concordance between telediagnosis and face-to-face diagnosis for pigmented lesions [11–13]. The possibility of searching for a combination of dermoscopic and clinical features in the case archive is, to the best of our knowledge, unique and allows the image archive to serve as a form of encyclopaedia. Further studies would be necessary to determine the real impact of the image archive on the improvement of the users' dermoscopic skills.

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Authors

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Carmo Gabriella, Canning Greg, Chan Gavin, Cook Benjamin, Cowell Lester, Cunliffe Timothy, Di Stefano Andrea Giuseppe, Díaz Ramón José Luis, Dreval Dmitry, Drljevic Irdina, Ehrsam Eric, Fernandez De Pierola Santiago, Fox Gary, Gabler Gerald, Gamo Reyes, Garcia Carlos, Giacomel Jason, Gómez Duaso Anselmo Javier, Gourhant Jean-Yves, Hannon Chris, Hofmann-Wellenhof Rainer, Hopkins Keith, Ionescu Paul Ilarian, Johnson Karen, Jyothish George, Kelly Lester, Landi Christian, Levin Alan, Manasievska Emilia, Mansur Ayşe Tülin, Martínez Díaz De Argandoña Concepción, McCormack Iona, Michenko Anna, Muir James, Nachiappan Siva, Nair Padmaja, Negreanu Rodica, Pastar Zrinjka, Peace Julian, Pellizzari Gary, Perera C. Mervyn, Phillips Alison, Piérard Eric, Poleva Irina, Pudova Jekaterina, Rasnik Favotto Bernardina, Riley Martin, Rodriguez Saa Sonia, Roediger Marc, Ruffion Nadia, Schwartz Rodrigo, Scriven William, Silverstein Marc, Simionescu Olga, Sortino-Rachou Ana Maria, Soyer Peter H., Spagnol Abraham Leonardo, Stansbury John A., Stelios Minas, Stojanovic Gordana, Strydom Franz, Tanaka Masaru, Timar Mariana, Tvrdeich Geoff, Vargas-Diez Erich, Viorel Anton, Vlajkovic Slobodan, Weaver Jere, Willett Rodney, Yayl Sava, Zalaudek Iris.

Discussants

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Disclosure Statement

G. Gabler, H.P. Soyer and R. Hofmann-Wellenhof are shareholders of e-derm-consult GmbH, Graz, Austria.

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