How did you decide to focus on rheumatology and vasculitis?

What I love about rheumatology is that it is like putting together the pieces of a puzzle, utilizing the patient’s history, their physical exam, and lab studies to establish a diagnosis and guide therapy. The pathology of many rheumatologic conditions involves multiple organ systems, and the management requires an understanding of concepts ranging from pharmacology to immunology to physiology. Rheumatologists foster better patient care by collaborating with other sub-specialty fields. Vasculitis can present and affect patients in so many different ways. Attention to detail and the ability to establish a strong doctor-patient relationship is critical to patient comfort, as well as their long-term management and prognosis.

What do you feel is the biggest issue facing patients with vasculitis?

I think the main challenge right now is finding ways/medications to keep vasculitis in remission, along with minimizing the side effects of the drugs that we need to use to control the disease. Relapse rates are still very high, and discovery of agents that can help minimize steroid exposure and toxicity are crucial to enhancing the lives of patients with vasculitis. We are building a team-based approach between the various subspecialties to enhance patient care and outcomes.

Does your clinic participate in research?

Yes. One of the major issues facing patients with vasculitis is the availability of clinical trials and coordinated care between multiple subspecialties. The clinic at the University of Chicago is increasingly participating in clinical trials and looking for opportunities to better serve patients with vasculitis.

What do you do when you’re not seeing patients or doing research?

I enjoy many hobbies including traveling, reading, running, playing and watching sports (soccer, basketball, football, rugby). I have participated in medical missions in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Africa. Working with patients in underserved areas and countries is a passion of mine.

If you weren’t a doctor, what would you do?

I would teach. I taught middle school history and Italian during my summers in college and for a year before starting medical school and loved it.

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