

Learning medical nuts, bolts and art

While working in the United States, Katrina Abat, MD, learned not only about the *practice* of medicine but also about the *art* of medicine.

She absorbed the details of Mohs surgery and cosmetic procedures. She also took in compassion, kindness and the art of putting patients at ease.

In December 2013, Dr. Abat participated in the ASDS International Preceptorship Program, which works to advance the specialty of dermatology surgery by giving international

dermatologic surgeons hands-on learning experience with new techniques and procedures that may not be available in their home country.

One Preceptee is selected each year to visit a host in the United States or Canada. There, they are able to watch clinical and surgical procedures and shadow administrative staff. They leave with new knowledge that will enhance the care of their patients back home. Lawrence M. Field, MD, provides financial support for the annual program. "I give many thanks to ASDS for this great opportunity and for a truly fruitful and fulfilling learning experience," Dr. Abat said.

Dr. Abat was selected as the 2013 International Preceptee. She is chief resident at the Skin and Cancer Foundation Inc. in Metro Manila, Philippines.

She selected Ronald Shelton, MD, as her Preceptor for her program because his practice centers mainly on Mohs surgery and cosmetic dermatology. Dr. Shelton is director of The New York Aesthetics Consultants in New York City.

Dr. Abat spent much of her time shadowing Dr. Shelton in the clinic. The days usually started at 7:30 a.m., with mornings typically busy with performing an average of four Mohs cases. She observed the micrographic surgery, read and discussed slides in between stages and observed repairs using flaps and grafts. She also spent some time in the lab to observe how slides for Mohs surgery are cut and prepared.

Afternoons were filled with consults and follow-ups of post-Mohs patients. "I was able to observe how wounds evolve through the different stages of the healing process and scar maturation," she said.

She learned different treatment strategies to produce the best possible scar for a patient. Besides Mohs cases, Dr. Abat also participated in cosmetic consults and procedures, including observing botulinum toxin injections, injection of fillers, laser procedures, punch grafts and TCA CROSS for acne scars.



2013 International Preceptee Katrina Abat, MD, came from the Philippines to shadow Ronald Shelton, MD, in New York City.

PROGRAM DETAILS

The ASDS International Preceptorship Program was established in 2011 through the Lawrence Field, MD, International Dermatologic Surgery Education Exchange Fund. The primary goal is to enhance the exchange of information and body of knowledge for an international preceptee through a visit to the United States.

The program assists international dermatologic surgeons in learning clinical and surgical techniques from an ASDS member in the United States or Canada.

The applicant must be a member of ASDS or other international dermatologic surgery society (based on approval by the Selection Work Group), practicing dermatologic surgery full-time in a non-U.S. dermatologic surgery private or academic institution and be, at minimum, a third-year dermatologic resident.

ASDS members can volunteer to host an international Preceptee.

Learn more at asds.net/International-Preceptorship/.

"Aside from learning a lot about dermatologic surgery, Dr. Shelton also taught me a lot about the art of medicine in his dealings with his patients," Dr. Abat said. "He never fails to discuss with the patient the disease process, all the treatment options and possible outcomes. He is kind, always had a smile on his face and never fails to make his patient as comfortable as possible."

Despite hectic schedules, Dr. Shelton found time to discuss interesting cases with Dr. Abat, encouraged questions and discussed career plans. "Upon learning I would like to be a Mohs surgeon, he has taken the effort in researching and guiding me toward possible paths toward this goal."

He was a teacher as well as mentor, she said. "The passion that he showed for his work and for teaching has inspired me to pursue further training in dermatologic surgery," she said, thanking Dr. Shelton and his staff for the experience.

"I always learn by teaching," said Dr. Shelton of participating in the International Preceptorship Program. "I feel that I am an ambassador of international dermatology, spreading the knowledge that I have learned from bright U.S. dermatologists to our international colleagues who can then return home and provide better care to their patients." ■