

The Expert Is In: Prince Adotama, MD



"This position in Brooklyn gives me the opportunity to bring my knowledge to a whole new subset of patients, as someone of color who has a vested interest in treating patients of color," says Dr. Prince Adotama, a dermatologist who will see patients at the Joseph S. and Diane H. Steinberg Ambulatory Care Center in Cobble Hill.

The first NYU Langone Health dermatologist regularly seeing patients in Brooklyn, Dr. Prince Adotama discusses his specialty in skin of color, including treatments for hair loss among Black women and razor bumps among Black men.

After four years working at the Joan H. and Preston Robert Tisch Center at Essex Crossing in Manhattan, in January you became the institution's first dermatologist with set hours each week in Brooklyn. What led you to this field and to this new post in the borough?

I wanted to become a dermatologist since I was an undergrad, and especially once I learned that it's the least ethnically diverse medical specialty in the country. This position in Brooklyn gives me the opportunity to bring my knowledge to a whole new subset of patients, as someone of color who has a vested interest in treating patients of color. Studies show that patients prefer race-concordant physicians, and I'm happy to carry that mantle. I'll be seeing patients regularly at the Joseph S. and Diane H. Steinberg Ambulatory Care Center in Cobble Hill.

One of your specialties is hair loss among Black women. What are some of the remedies?

Oftentimes people of color, especially Black women, suffer scarring hair loss, called Central Centrifugal Cicatricial Alopecia (CCCA), which destroys hair follicles and causes scarring. It is understudied and can be difficult to treat, yet it's the most common condition I see. In the past, CCCA was called "hot comb alopecia," which would suggest that it's caused by various hair-grooming practices. Patients were often told by doctors, "Stop these products. Don't wear braids, don't wear weaves, don't wear wigs." They said "no" to everything but offered few solutions. At NYU Langone Health, depending on the patient, we may suggest alternative low-tension hairstyles or provide treatments that do not interfere with current hairstyle preferences. We might also utilize alternative treatment options such as platelet-rich plasma. I guide patients through the options and we make decisions together.

You also specialize in a condition that impacts men of color: Razor bumps, known as pseudofolliculitis barbae. What are some treatments?

Yes, anyone can get razor bumps, but they primarily affect people with Afro-textured hair, because it is coarser. Shaving might cause the hair to curl backward and penetrate the skin, which leads to inflammation that manifests as painful, irritated bumps. For men of color, this can impact their quality of life and make them feel self-conscious about their appearance. There's a multitude of treatments from topicals and oral medications to lasers and chemical peels. A recent [study](#) in JAMA Dermatology found that barbershops can be great allies in reaching men of color with this condition. In the past, barbershops have already proven to be great avenues to raise awareness about high blood pressure and colon cancer screenings.

You helped co-found NYU Langone's Skin of Color Program, an initiative launched in 2021 to research, diagnose, and treat dermatological conditions that affect people of color. Could you speak about the program and your colleagues' specialties?

Happy to. There are only 16 academic skin-of-color centers in the country. Our program emphasizes medical therapies, clinical research, and educational training for residents. My amazing colleagues each has a special interest in a condition

impacting pigmented skin. [Lisa Akintilo, MD](#) is a fellowship-trained cosmetic dermatologist, with a specialty in laser hair removal. [Daniel Gutierrez, MD](#) is an expert in vitiligo, an autoimmune condition that causes patches of skin to lose pigment or color. [Nayoung Lee, MD](#) specializes in dermatologic surgery and lasers, with an interest in treating scars and hyperpigmentation. And [Avrom Caplan, MD](#), focuses on those with sarcoidosis, which are inflammations that affect the skin, and other conditions that require interdisciplinary care.

Finally, NYU Langone's theme for Black History Month this year is "Making a history of excellence today." Could you speak about what that means to you? Of course. For many decades, dermatology textbooks and literature did not include people of color. But today, we are working toward a history of excellence as dermatologists who make sure that patients of color are a part of the mix. NYU Langone has put a lot of effort into making sure every department has diversity directors. As the director for diversity, equity and inclusion for the Department of Dermatology, my job is to be sure our residents and future dermatologists have a curriculum that includes clinics, speakers, lectures, and lessons that reflects the array of skin types. It's important that they're able to provide excellent, culturally competent care to everyone who walks through their doors.