
PAEDIATRIC DERMATOLOGIST'S WORK IS MORE THAN SKIN DEEP



Dr Antoinette Chateau with abandoned children at a home in Durban.

Children have an innocence and honesty that make treating them an absolute pleasure, says KwaZulu-Natal's only Paediatric Dermatologist, Dr Antoinette Chateau.

Chateau is Head of Dermatology at the Pietermaritzburg Complex, and a lecturer in UKZN's Department of Dermatology at the Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine.

'I consider my consultations as play sessions rather than clinical consultations. It is most rewarding to see children well, healed and playful again after therapeutic intervention,' she said.

As the first and only Paediatric Dermatologist in the province, Chateau said: 'I feel blessed with the opportunity and support I have received from the department to follow my passion and treat children with various skin conditions throughout KZN. One of my goals is to work with my colleagues in the department and train more Paediatric Dermatologists. Presently I am in the process of registering the subspeciality and hopefully UKZN will offer the first specialised paediatric dermatology fellowship in Africa.'

Chateau says her department's HoD, Professor Ncoza Dlova, has supported her every step of the way. 'She has been extremely instrumental in assisting me to achieve my dream, linking me up with internationally renowned doyens of paediatric dermatology as well as providing endless motivations for funding, approval of leave and recommendations. She is my mentor, my role model and continues to push me to achieve greater heights.'

Chateau runs a specialist paediatric dermatology outreach clinic on a Tuesday at Greys Hospital in Pietermaritzburg and on a Friday at King Edward VIII hospital. The Greys clinic was established in 2011 and the King Edward clinic in 2013.

She completed a Diploma in Child Health during her community service training. 'Dermatology has always been my passion so pursuing a career in paediatric dermatology amalgamates both the disciplines I love,' added Chateau.

She is currently completing her Master of Medical Science on the outcomes of systemic steroids and intravenous immunoglobulin in HIV infected patients with Stevens Johnson syndrome and Toxic epidermal necrolysis. She plans to register for a PhD within her subspecialty with her future research focusing on atopic dermatitis.

'Atopic dermatitis is a common childhood dermatosis and greatly affects the quality of life of the patients and their families,' said Chateau.

Empowering parents to understand their children's condition and as well as educating both children and parents as to their skin conditions, keeps her going. 'Seeing a child get better and witnessing the relief and gratitude of parents makes it worthwhile.'

Chateau's Pietermaritzburg team is currently working with Department of Health (E -Health) to establish a teledermatology unit to service all hospitals in area two.

'We are also planning to start a basic dermatology teaching programme for primary health care nurses. This is an attempt to teach recognition and management of basic and common skin conditions to rural healthcare health providers in order to minimise unnecessary referrals from afar. This is a project which has been initiated by the Department of Dermatology of which I'm very excited to be part of.'

Chateau, the co-author of a chapter in the second edition of the book: *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, said her parents were her anchor, encouraging her to pursue her dream of obtaining her paediatric fellowship even when it seemed impossible.

Nombuso Dlamini