International Psoriasis Council leads effort to clarify the genetic architecture of psoriasis

Thursday, June 7, 2012 – Dallas, TX. International Psoriasis Council (IPC) today announced the publication of a report in the British Journal of Dermatology’s June edition that summarizes the IPC’s efforts to establish collaboration among leading geneticists and dermatologists to advance the understanding of the genetic basis of psoriasis.

The report (http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1365-2133.2012.10895.x/abstract) outlines the remarkable progress achieved through the implementation of genome-wide association studies that have highlighted the key pathogenic pathways leading to psoriasis. The International Psoriasis Council now plans to use this knowledge by conducting a joint scientific, laboratory and patient-related study to better define the genetic architecture of psoriasis.

The goal is to help design targeted therapies, the development of markers to monitor disease progression and drug responsiveness to help the vast numbers of patients afflicted with this condition.
The article is entitled, “The quest for psoriasis susceptibility genes in the postgenome-wide association studies era: charting the road ahead.” Its authors are Dr. Francesca Capon, Division of Genetics and Molecular Medicine, King’s College, London, UK and Professor Jonathan Barker of St. Johns Institute of Dermatology, King’s College, London, UK (Br J Dermatol. 2012 Jun;166(6):1173-5).

Professor Barker, an IPC Board Member, who is facilitating the initiative, stated “There have been huge advances in the understanding of the inherited basis of psoriasis. But we are only partially complete in clarifying the genetic effect.”

IPC launched the collaboration in October 2011, by convening a workshop that included groups from the genetic research laboratories of Professors Goncalo Abecasis (University of Michigan, USA); Richard Trembath (King’s College, London, UK); J.T. Elder (University of Michigan, USA); Andre Reis (University of Erlangen-Nuremburg, Germany); Andre Franke (Christian-Albrechts University, Kiel, Germany); Anne Bowcock (Washington University, St Louis, USA). Also in attendance were dermatologists and IPC board members, Jonathan Barker, Herve Bachelez (Hospital Saint-Louis, Paris, France), Wolfram Sterry, (Charité University, Berlin, Germany); Alexa Kimball , (Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, USA) and Craig Leonardi (St Louis University, USA).

The collaboration is expected to lay the groundwork for innovative approaches to novel treatment strategies as well as to defining the therapeutic response to treatments in specific psoriasis patients by building a bridge between the genotype and phenotype of the disease.

Peter van de Kerkhof (Radboud University Nijmegen Medical Centre, Nijmegen, Netherlands), President of IPC, added “This is a landmark effort since it brings
together the world’s leading experts in the fields of genetics and psoriasis in a collaborative venture to complete the genetic map of psoriasis, and with it the potential to deliver better future treatments.”

Psoriasis is a chronic, genetically-determined, inflammatory systemic disease that affects approximately 1 – 2% of the population worldwide (approximately 125 million patients). The disease manifests most notably as characteristic skin lesions distinguished by red, scaly disfiguring plaques. In addition, psoriasis in certain individuals is associated with a variety of potentially life-threatening comorbidities and also results in profound impairment of quality of life and social well-being in the psoriatic population at large.

Founded in 2004, the International Psoriasis Council (IPC) is a dermatology led, global nonprofit organization dedicated to innovation across the full spectrum of psoriasis through research, education and care. Its vision is to improve scientific knowledge and bring the best care to all patients with psoriasis.