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What is the American Acne & Rosacea Society?

Now entering its fifth year of existence, the American Acne & Rosacea Society (AARS) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to furthering education and research related to acne and rosacea, two very common skin disorders that comprise approximately 12 to 13 percent of office visits to ambulatory dermatology practices across the United States. The AARS offers several opportunities for residents in dermatology who are interested in acne and rosacea, including AARS Research Grants and AARS Mentorship Grants.

In July 2009, the AARS Board of Directors met to define current goals that include increasing awareness of these diseases within the specialty of dermatology, expanding membership, increasing the number of research grants, and redesigning and expanding the AARS website. Additionally, a major educational initiative continues to be National Acne Awareness Month (NAAM) sponsored by the AARS held each June. The AARS intends to become progressively more visible and hopes to assist in helping clinicians better care for their acne and rosacea patients.

What was the outcome of the first National Acne Awareness Month?

June 2009 marked the first annual NAAM sponsored by the AARS. A vast array of interconnected and highly targeted public relations (PR) and educational initiatives were planned and executed in order to raise the general awareness level of acne as a medical condition. The need for affected individuals to seek early treatment from a dermatologist in order to avert adverse sequelae was emphasized.

On June 1, 2009, acnemonth.org was launched, providing acne sufferers with general acne education and treatment information. More than 100,000 people visited the site in June 2009, driven by an online banner advertising campaign. This website "hit" number is comparable to many direct-to-consumer branded acne product campaigns, highlighting the definite need to provide quality educational information to acne sufferers, as they are regularly searching for information about acne.

Throughout the month of June 2009, a series of five continuing medical education (CME) webinars

THE AMERICAN ACNE & ROSACEA SOCIETY

The American Acne & Rosacea Society (AARS), founded in 2005, provides a forum for the exchange of information about acne and rosacea as well as the promotion of research into these two skin diseases. Its mission is to address the need to bring clarity to the millions of Americans who are suffering from acne and/or rosacea and who are not receiving adequate treatment. For more information, visit www.acnesociety.org. If you are interested in becoming a member or have questions about the AARS, feel free to contact Stacey Moore, the AARS Executive Director, via phone: (888) 744-DERM (3376) or e-mail: physicianresources.org.

were conducted. A variety of clinically relevant acne-related topics were presented and discussed by different, nationally recognized dermatologists who have a special interest in acne. More than 4,100 participants have completed at least one of the CME webinars, either live or virtually, through derm.org, where the webinar series will remain accessible through May 2010.

The AARS also implemented a full PR campaign surrounding NAAM. All combined, these NAAM PR activities reached more than 13 million people nationwide. The AARS/NAAM press release received coverage in over 100 outlets (including Reuters, Forbes, and Yahoo!). A satellite media tour was conducted by Drs. Diane Berson and Eva Ritvo to publicize the results of the AARS Image-Based Survey. The survey found that teens who suffer from acne are perceived by both teens and adults as less successful in life, less happy, and less outgoing than teens who do not have acne. The satellite media tour received 167 airings nationwide, resulting in more than four million viewers and was a resounding success. The AARS also utilized an online Public Service Announcement (iPSA) to reach additional acne sufferers. The iPSA focused on subject matters similar to the results of the Image-Based Survey and portrayed a teen girl who did not have the confidence she needed to interview for an internship because of her acne. The iPSA was posted on more than 20 websites including

iVillage, CNN i-Report, and TeenVogue. All of the PR activities urged consumers to go to acnesociety.org (the official website of the AARS). Also, during NAAM, a clickable NAAM logo was placed on the homepage to allow consumers to also visit acnemonth.com for further information.

The first ever NAAM was a major success and provided information deeply valuable to acne sufferers and their parents. The AARS plans to continue NAAM activities on an even greater scale in the years to come, with the goal that NAAM becomes as well recognized as other key disease awareness months. The NAAM activities were made possible through an unrestricted educational grant from Galderma Laboratories, LP. None of the activities were related to any product or company.

How were AARS research grants expanded?

The Board of Directors of the AARS has added an additional annual research grant to bring the total of awarded grants to four each year. Additionally, a community dermatologist research grant was also added to be made available to dermatologists in clinical practice who wish to design and complete a research project related to acne or rosacea. All AARS research and mentorship grants must be submitted to the AARS Grant Committee for evaluation and approval via the AARS website at acnesociety.org.

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