

A Conversation with Elsa Awad

CSPA Committee Member: Affiliate Members, Breaking Barriers



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Educational Resource Developer

Why did you get involved with CSPA?

I became involved with CSPA as a medical student with a strong interest in dermatology and patient advocacy. Through my medical training and prior research and community work, I've seen how skin conditions can affect far more than physical health; they can influence mental well-being, self-esteem, and quality of life. I was drawn to CSPA's patient-centred mission and its commitment to amplifying patient voices and addressing stigma in dermatologic care.

What do you perceive as outcomes of your involvement?

Through my work with CSPA, I've had the opportunity to contribute to the translations and development of educational materials, reports, and initiatives that highlight patient experiences and barriers to care. I believe this work helps ensure that patient perspectives are meaningfully represented in advocacy efforts and policy discussions. Ultimately, these contributions support patients by improving access to reliable information and help advance more inclusive, patient-driven dermatologic care.

Why do you like volunteering with CSPA?

Volunteering with CSPA has been incredibly rewarding. I've gained meaningful insight into the lived experiences of individuals affected by skin conditions. Hearing advocates speak and reading firsthand accounts of the physical, emotional, and social impacts of these conditions has broadened my understanding beyond what is taught in medical textbooks or clinical settings.

Why would you tell others that they should get involved with CSPA?

Whether you are a patient, student, healthcare professional, or ally, CSPA provides meaningful ways to participate in important conversations, support patient communities, and drive positive change in dermatologic health. CSPA reminds us that healthcare is not only about diagnosis and treatment, but also about listening, representation, and ensuring that every voice helps shape more inclusive and accessible care.

Has a personal connection with the skin patient community inspired your participation?

Learning about the physical discomfort, emotional burden, and social stigma that many individuals living with skin conditions experience has reshaped my perspective. It has reminded me that behind every diagnosis is a person navigating challenges that are often invisible to others. This understanding has deepened my commitment to compassionate, patient-centred care, values that will guide me in the kind of physician I aspire to become.