

**SCANNING AND TRANSMISSION ELECTRON  
MICROSCOPY OF THE SCALY SCALP IN  
DIFFERENT DERMATOLOGICAL DISEASES**

*Thesis submitted for fulfillment of Master Degree in  
Dermatology and Venereology*

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*This Work is dedicated:*

*To My Parents, My Brothers, My Sister & My Fiancée*

## **LIST OF CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Introduction and Aim of the work</b>	1
<b>Review of Literature</b>	3
<b>Patients and Methods</b>	51
<b>Results</b>	59
<b>Discussion</b>	114
<b>Summary and conclusion</b>	120
<b>References</b>	122
<b>Arabic Summary</b>	139

## **LIST OF TABLES**

	page
<b>Table (1):</b> Raw data of patients	59
<b>Table (2):</b> Summary of SEM results	63
<b>Table (3):</b> Summary of TEM results	89

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<i>(EGF)</i>	Epidermal growth factor
<i>(ECAAF)</i>	Endothelial cell stimulating angiogenesis factor
<i>(H&amp;E)</i>	Hematoxyllin and Eosin
<i>(HLA)</i>	Histocompatibility leucocyte antigen
<i>(ICAM)</i>	Intercellular adhesion molecule
<i>(ICS)</i>	Intercellular cell space
<i>(INF - <math>\alpha</math>)</i>	Interferon alpha
<i>(INF - <math>\beta</math>)</i>	Interferon beta
<i>(INF - <math>\gamma</math>)</i>	Interferon gamma
<i>(IGF)</i>	Insulin growth factor
<i>(IL)</i>	Interleukin
<i>(KGF)</i>	Keratinocyte growth factor
<i>(LFA)</i>	Lymphocyte function associated antigen
<i>(M.)</i>	Microsporium
<i>(MHC)</i>	Major histocompatibility complex
<i>(P.)</i>	Propiobacterium
<i>(PDGF)</i>	Platelet derived growth factor

<i>(PA)</i>	Pityriasis amiantacea
<i>(PAS)</i>	Periodic acid schiff
<i>(PRP)</i>	Pitryiasis rubra pilaris
<i>(SD)</i>	Seborrheic dermatitis
<i>(SEM)</i>	Scanning electron microscope or microscopy
<i>(TCR)</i>	T cell receptor
<i>(TEM)</i>	Transmission Electron microscope or microscopy
<i>(TGF – <math>\alpha</math>)</i>	Transforming growth factor alpha
<i>(TGF – <math>\beta</math>)</i>	Transforming Growth factor beta
<i>(Th-1)</i>	T helper 1
<i>(Th-2)</i>	T helper 2
<i>(TNF – <math>\alpha</math>)</i>	Tumor necrosis factor alpha
<i>(VCAM)</i>	Vascular cellular adhesion molecule
<i>(VEGF)</i>	Vascular endothelial growth factor

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Fig.(1):</b> Schematic diagram of the epidermis.	4
<b>Fig.(2):</b> Electron microgram showing details of upper part of epidermis.	8
<b>Fig.(3):</b> The cell cycle.	14
<b>Fig.(4):</b> SEM of image of scaling horny skin.	18
<b>Fig.(5):</b> SEM of normal stratum corneum.	19
<b>Fig.(6):</b> TEM of normal stratum corneum.	20
<b>Fig.(7):</b> SEM of stratum corneum in Psoriasis.	21
<b>Fig.(8):</b> TEM of Stratum Corneum in Psoriasis.	22-23
<b>Fig.(9):</b> SEM of stratum corneum in seborrheic dermatitis and dandruff.	24
<b>Fig.(10):</b> TEM of stratum corneum in dandruff.	25
<b>Fig.(11):</b> Scanning electron microscope.	53
<b>Fig.(12):</b> Transmission electron microscope.	56
<b>Fig.(13):</b> Scanning electron micrograph of a psoriatic plaque.	64
<b>Fig.(14):</b> A higher magnification of the previous section.	64
<b>Fig.(15):</b> Scanning electron micrograph of a psoriatic plaque.	65
<b>Fig.(16):</b> A higher magnification of the previous section.	65
<b>Fig.(17):</b> Scanning electron micrograph of psoriatic scales.	66

<b>Fig.(18):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of psoriatic scales.	66
<b>Fig.(19):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of some desquamated cells in a psoriatic plaque.	67
<b>Fig.(20):</b>	A higher magnification of the previous section.	67
<b>Fig.(21):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of a psoriatic plaque.	68
<b>Fig.(22):</b>	A higher magnification of the previous section.	68
<b>Fig.(23):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of a psoriatic plaque.	69
<b>Fig.(24):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of a psoriatic plaque.	69
<b>Fig.(25):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of a psoriatic plaque.	70
<b>Fig.(26):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of a seborrheic dermatitis plaque.	71
<b>Fig.(27):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of dandruff scales.	71
<b>Fig.(28):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of a seborrheic dermatitis plaque.	72
<b>Fig.(29):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of a seborrheic dermatitis plaque.	72
<b>Fig.(30):</b>	A higher magnification of the previous field.	73
<b>Fig.(31):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of a seborrheic dermatitis plaque.	73
<b>Fig.(32):</b>	A higher magnification of a part of the previous field.	74
<b>Fig.(33):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of dandruff scales.	74



<b>Fig.(34):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of a seborrheic dermatitis plaque	75
<b>Fig.(35):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of dandruff scales.	75
<b>Fig.(36):</b>	A higher magnification of a part of the previous field.	76
<b>Fig.(37):</b>	scanning electron micrograph of a seborrheic dermatitis plaque	76
<b>Fig.(38):</b>	A higher magnification of a part of the previous field.	77
<b>Fig.(39):</b>	Another higher magnification of the same field.	77
<b>Fig.(40):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of a seborrheic dermatitis plaque.	78
<b>Fig.(41):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of a seborrheic dermatitis plaque.	78
<b>Fig.(42):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of a pityriasis amiantacea scales.	79
<b>Fig.(43):</b>	A higher magnification of a pityriasis amiantacea scales.	79
<b>Fig.(44):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of a pityriasis amiantacea scales.	80
<b>Fig.(45):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of pityriasis rubra pilaris scales.	80
<b>Fig.(46):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of pityriasis rubra pilaris scales.	81
<b>Fig.(47):</b>	A higher magnification of pityriasis rubr pilaris scales.	81
<b>Fig.(48):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of pityriasis rubra pilaris scales.	82
<b>Fig.(49):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of pityriasis rubra pilaris scales.	82

<b>Fig.(50):</b>	A higher magnification of a pityriasis rubra pilaris scales.	83
<b>Fig.(51):</b>	A higher magnification of a part of the previous field.	83
<b>Fig.(52):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of the scales from tinea capitis.	84
<b>Fig.(53):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of the scales from tinea capitis.	84
<b>Fig.(54):</b>	Scanning electron micrograph of the scales from tinea capitis.	85
<b>Fig.(55):</b>	Transmission electron micrograph of stratum corneum in psoriasis.	90
<b>Fig.(56):</b>	A higher magnification of a part of the previous field.	91
<b>Fig.(57):</b>	Transmission electron micrograph of stratum corneum in psoriasis.	92
<b>Fig.(58):</b>	Transmission electron micrograph of stratum corneum in psoriasis.	93
<b>Fig.(59):</b>	A higher magnification of a part of the previous field.	94
<b>Fig.(60):</b>	Transmission electron micrograph of a stratum corneum in seborrheic dermatitis.	95
<b>Fig.(61):</b>	A higher magnification of a part of the previous field.	96
<b>Fig.(62):</b>	Transmission electron micrograph of a stratum corneum in seborrheic dermatitis.	97
<b>Fig.(63):</b>	A higher magnification of a part of the previous field.	98
<b>Fig.(64):</b>	Transmission electron micrograph of a stratum corneum in seborrheic dermatitis.	99
<b>Fig.(65):</b>	A higher magnification of a part of the	100

	previous field.	
<b>Fig.(66):</b>	Transmission electron micrograph of dandruff.	101
<b>Fig.(67):</b>	A higher magnification of a part of the previous field.	102
<b>Fig.(68):</b>	Transmission electron micrograph of dandruff.	103
<b>Fig.(69):</b>	A higher magnification of a part of the previous field.	104
<b>Fig.(70):</b>	Transmission electronmicrograph of stratum corneum in pityriasis amiantacea	105
<b>Fig.(71):</b>	A higher magnification of a part of the previous field.	106
<b>Fig.(72):</b>	Transmission electron micrograph of stratum corneum in pityriasis rubra pilaris.	107
<b>Fig.(73):</b>	A higher magnification of a part of the previous field.	108
<b>Fig.(74):</b>	Transmission electron micrograph of stratum corneum in pityriasis rubra pilaris.	109
<b>Fig.(75):</b>	A higher magnification of a part of the previous field.	110
<b>Fig.(76):</b>	Transmission electron micrograph of scales in scaly tinea capitis.	111
<b>Fig.(77):</b>	Transmission electron micrograph of scales in scaly tinea capitis.	112
<b>Fig.(78):</b>	A higher magnification of a part of the previous field.	113

## **ABSTRACT**

**Background and Objectives:** The scales of some scalp disorders were examined by scanning electron microscope (SEM), and transmission electron microscope (TEM) with the purpose of revealing importance of stratum corneum in the diagnosis of these disorders and studying possible correlation between morphological data and pathologic hypotheses in the dermatoses of the scalp. **Patients and methods:** 20 patients with various scaly scalp disorders are selected. From each patient, a skin surface biopsy for (SEM), and a punch skin biopsy for (TEM) were taken. They included 6 patients with psoriasis, 5 patients with seborrheic dermatitis (SD), 2 patients with dandruff, 2 patients with pityriasis amiantacea (PA), 2 patients with pityriasis rubra pilaris (PRP) and 2 patients with scaly tinea capitis. **Results:** SEM revealed specific surface patterns (print) of diseased cells which were: "hexagonal" in psoriasis, "heart-shaped" in SD, "polyhedral" in dandruff and PA, "rock-like" in PRP and fungal colonies obscuring the external morphological features in scaly tinea capitis. TEM revealed presence of remnants of nuclei and lipid droplets in all scaly scalp dermatoses. The characteristic findings for each disorder were: in psoriasis "retained intracellular lamellar bodies", in SD & dandruff "numerous lipid inclusions, intercellular lipids and wide intercellular space ", in PA "wide corneal separation with finger-like projections", in PRP "almost normal intercellular space" and in scaly tinea capitis "normal stratum corneum structure with massive fungal spores infiltration". **Conclusion:** Specific SEM and TEM findings for each scaly scalp disorder reflect the importance of the alteration of stratum corneum in hypotheses of these diseases and that there is a different underlying pathologic process of every disease. **Key words:** scanning electron microscope- transmission electron microscope- psoriasis - seborrheic dermatitis - dandruff -pityriasis amiantacea.

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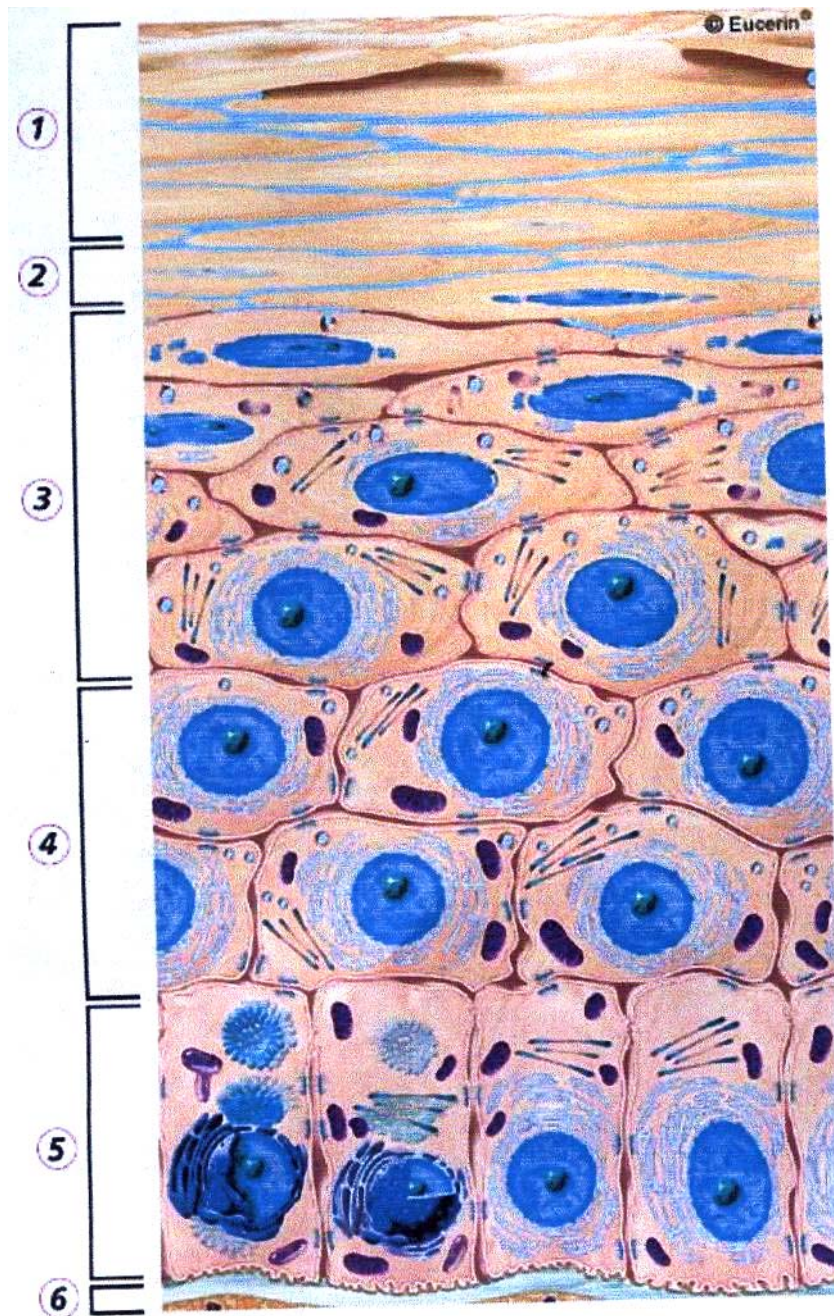
# **The Basic Structure of the Epidermis**

The epidermis is the outermost layer of the skin. It is directly contiguous with the environment (*Odom et al., 2000*). The epidermis provides a physical barrier, for the sake of physiological homeostasis as well as exclusion of harmful organisms and external agents (*Irene, 2003*).

The normal epidermis is terminally differentiated stratified squamous epithelium. It is approximately 0.4 to 1.5 mm thickness, as compared to 1.5 to 4 mm full-thickness skin. It is composed of three basic cell types; keratinocytes, melanocytes, and Langerhans' cells, in addition to merkel cell (*Odland, 1991*).

The keratinocyte is an ectodermally-derived cell. It is the principal cell of epidermis making up at least 80% of epidermal cells. Keratinocytes are organized into distinct cellular layers; stratum basale, stratum spinosum, stratum granulosum and stratum corneum (*Mc Grath et al., 2004*). The characteristics of each epidermal layer reflect the mitotic and synthetic properties of the keratinocytes and their state of differentiation (*Chu et al., 2003*) (Fig. 1).

The stratum basale or the basal layer consists of a single layer of cuboidal shaped keratinocytes that attach to the basement membrane zone. These cells have relatively large nuclear cytoplasmic ratio and slightly basophilic cytoplasm. They often contain melanin pigment transferred from adjacent melanocytes, the extent and distribution of the pigment correlate with skin color. Most of the mitotic activity in normal epidermis occurs in the basal cell layer (*Murphy, 1995*).



**Fig. (1):** Schematic diagram of the epidermis: the basal cells change, though differentiation, into flat horny skin cells that are without nuclei (*Higazi, 2000*).

1. Horny layer.
2. Clear layer.
3. Granular layer
4. Prickle cell layer.
5. Basal layer.
6. Basal membrane.