

I was truly honored to have had the opportunity through the WDS and Procter and Gamble to attend the Procter and Gamble Science Behind Symposium this past April, along with other wonderful dermatologists from across the country. Over a period of two days we had the opportunity to learn from the scientists at Procter and Gamble, visit their laboratories, and learn more about the innovation that goes into their products.

Procter and Gamble laboratories focus on sound scientific rigor, with discovery as a primary goal, defining performance, and then demonstrating proof. Amongst the labs we were able to visit included the areas where gene chip experiments were run. P&G runs the most gene chip experiments than any other company or academic institution in the world. With the generation of this volume of data comes the need to utilize “big data” driven by their bioinformaticists to find meaningful relationships and areas to focus on for future innovations. Skin biomarkers are utilized to look beyond the surface - as an example examination of inflammatory cytokines, and signs and signals of keratinocyte differentiation. A new ingredient lab is utilized to efficiently screen thousands of ingredients for efficacy.

Efficacy is of paramount importance, but another aspect of effectiveness that is focused on is that “delight drives compliance.” User experience is key to maintaining compliance - something that is an important consideration as we design treatment regimens for our patients. P&G goes to the consumer’s environment and factors in the actual everyday regimens as they design their products to maximize efficacy and compliance.

Collaboration is highly valued at P&G. This was apparent materially from the goal to bring the skincare laboratories closer together physically to facilitate exchange, but also culturally from the efforts to foster dialogue and engage in debate. Together, amongst their scientists, with their consumers, and with their involvement of dermatologic expertise, they look at the skincare needs of our patients, and seek to redefine what is possible. Through conversations with Procter and Gamble scientists, and sharing ideas and experiences with fellow dermatologists this symposium was an invaluable opportunity to look at the science behind the development of innovations in skincare.