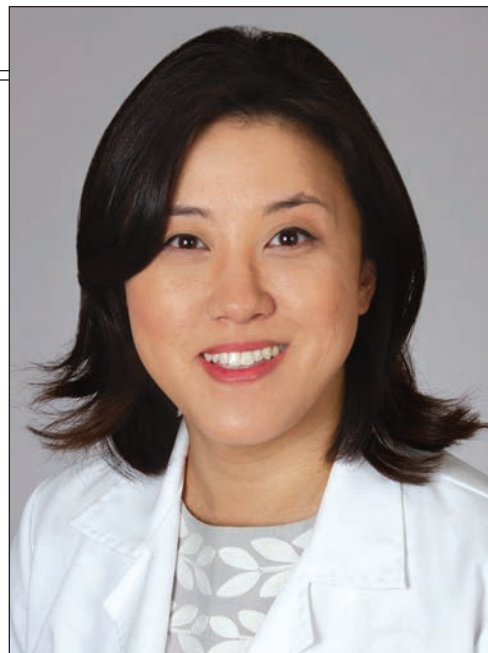


# Future Star: Laura Shin, DPM, PhD

This young practitioner has a true love of academia.

BY MARC HASPEL, DPM



One area of success in podiatric medicine that should never be overlooked is academic excellence. All too often, recognition is only granted to those who step forward into positions of leadership. The profession, however, cannot move forward without those dedicated to the science of medicine. Working with less visibility, there are those individuals dedicated to improving the science behind not only the practice of podiatric medicine but all of medicine as well. Their work raises the bar upon which the rest of the profession can state its claim to practice. The next future star in *Podiatry Management's* series certainly fills that bill. Laura Shin, DPM, PhD, has been nominated by David Armstrong, DPM, PhD—he himself a noted academic within the profession.

Dr. Shin received her BA in behavioral biology from Johns Hopkins University. Her interest in the potential for stem cell mediated repair in diabetic wounds and her deep commitment to patient care led her to pursue a dual PhD and DPM degree at the Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science, becoming the first dedicated student to do so. Dr. Shin joined the Keck School of Medicine of USC and the Southwestern Academic Limb Salvage Alliance (SALSA) in 2018 after completing

residencies in podiatric surgery and rear foot and ankle surgery, and a fellowship in Limb Salvage and Reconstruction at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

Dr. Shin recently took time to discuss several aspects of her early impressive podiatric and scientific career.

ests at Scholl while I completed my DPM and PhD.

Dr. Patrick Burns and my attendings at UPMC not only are skilled surgeons, but they treated me like family, and have developed one of the most comprehensive and cutting-edge residency programs in the country. Dr. Lawrence Harkless has spent count-

**“Diabetes, an aging population, and loss of mobility are immense healthcare burdens and podiatric physicians have the ability to help improve the quality of life for many of these people.”**

**PM:** *Who in podiatric medicine influenced you the most thus far in your career? To whom else do you give thanks?*

**Shin:** I have been extremely fortunate to have incredibly talented, inspiring, and supportive mentors. Dr. David Armstrong first recruited me into the field of podiatry when I was conducting stem cell research at Northwestern University and allowed me to see the immense value and potential of this profession. Dr. Nancy Parsley and Dr. Stephanie Wu encouraged and created opportunities for me to balance my clinical training with my research inter-

less hours providing mentorship and encouragement. These individuals all taught me the importance of paying it forward and fostering the next generation of podiatric physicians. They are truly an inspiration, and I would not be here without them.

**PM:** *What first attracted you to a career in podiatric medicine?*

**Shin:** I loved the impact that this profession could have in the medical landscape. Diabetes, an aging population, and loss of mobility are immense healthcare burdens and podiatric physicians have the ability to help

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Dr. Shin (from page 135)

improve the quality of life for many of these people. I also loved that doctors of podiatric medicine could do so much with this career. Very few medical professions allow one to be involved with patients like a primary

trauma at University of Pittsburgh Medical Center under Dr. Patrick Burns. UPMC is an academic institution and we worked within the orthopedic department. All of our rotations were with residents and fellows from other specialties and we were expected to know all aspects of medicine.

help us with parity within our respective hospitals and institutions. I think that the other organizations that function within our profession are also important to help foster specialization and other areas where we further develop our expertise.

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**“The APMA plays an important role in advancing this profession and acts as an advocate for it.”**

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care physician but also have a thriving surgical practice. My research interests are focused on how different disease states can affect our ability to heal. My career as an academic surgeon allows me the opportunity to do translational research in the laboratory and to evaluate surgical patients. It is a field that has incredible potential to impact many lives.

**PM:** *What are your goals both short-term and long-term for your career in podiatric medicine?*

**Shin:** Short term, I am involved with training fellows at USC and residents from the surrounding area. We serve a population of greater than 10 million people, and are seeing some incredible pathology. Care for these individuals, however, can be inconsistent. I hope to develop a comprehensive academic center with Dr. Armstrong for the Southland to share and develop surgical techniques, new technologies, and ideas. Long term, I am working to create prognostic tools for Charcot and other complications related to diabetes, and recently started a laboratory for translational research.

**PM:** *What College of Podiatric Medicine did you attend? Where and how would you describe your post-graduate training?*

**Shin:** I graduated from William M. Scholl at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science with a dual degree, DPM/PhD. I did my residency training and fellowship in limb salvage, reconstruction, and

We had academic meetings twice a week, including radiology rounds where we presented our own cases and attended a didactic session. We also had a weekly hands-on lab utilizing saw bones or cadavers. We got endoscopic training semi-annually and hosted an annual conference.

All residents were involved in clinical research and spent time in clinics learning how to manage huge patient volumes, surgical complications, revisions, coding, and billing. Surgically our caseloads were incredibly challenging, and we were well

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trained in all aspects of forefoot and rear foot reconstructions. Most residents completed their numbers well before the end of their second year and learned multiple ways to handle all forms of pathology. Like many other graduates, I felt grateful to have had such training.

**PM:** *What are your thoughts about APMA, the certifying boards, and other organizations that function within the profession?*

**Shin:** The APMA plays an important role in advancing this profession and acts as an advocate for it. I think that board certification is important to validate our training and continues to

**PM:** *What sub-specialties interest you in podiatric medicine, and why?*

**Shin:** I am extremely interested in translational medicine, specifically looking at ways to develop better prognostic tools. I seek to find ways to tell if a wound will become chronic, if a Charcot event can be prevented, or ways to ensure a bone is cleared of all infection. By the time a patient comes to see us, often they have developed a problem and often we have limited options for salvage. I hope to buy us more time so we can provide better outcomes for our patients.

**PM:** *What type of practice arrangement, i.e. solo, small, or large group suits you the best?*

**Shin:** I am in an academic institution within the Department of Surgery. From residency, I think it is real-

ly important to maintain an academic schedule to review cases, and stay up-to-date with new literature. I also enjoy the team approach and have great colleagues from multiple specialties to consult and treat patients comprehensively. For me, working with other residents from different specialties is also beneficial to help show them the value of podiatric surgeons.

**PM:** *Where do you see your career being in 10 years, 20 years?*

**Shin:** I hope to stay in academic medicine as a physician-scientist. I hope to have contributed to the field by providing good patient care, train-

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# PM'S FUTURE STARS

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*Dr. Shin (from page 136)*

ing residents and fellows, and writing important papers in the field.

**PM:** *What are your thoughts on the overall role of podiatric medicine in the current healthcare system?*

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**Shin:** I believe podiatric medicine is an integral part of the healthcare system. The job of podiatric physicians is to provide education, preventative screening, and reconstructive options to patients, which is really unique to the profession. I think doctors of podiatric medicine can

be under-valued without the right representation and advocacy. I think having more podiatrists in academic institutions can help promote the profession.

**PM:** *What should this profession do to continue to attract sound quality individuals like yourself?*

**Shin:** I believe the profession must continue to pursue efforts for parity and have a uniform scope of practice throughout the country. I think as a profession, having higher admission standards and comprehensive residency training will attract strong candidates.

**PM:** *You're raising a young family. How are you managing a busy work-life balance?*

**Shin:** I am fortunate to have two beautiful sons, one is 6 years old and the other is a year and a half. I have a wonderful husband who has started working for a start-up risk management firm to have more flexibility for our children. We try to have dinner together every night, and sometimes that even means eating at the hospital cafeteria. On weekends, we love spending time together and I try to finish charting, phone calls, etc. at work so I'm completely present at home.

**PM:** *Would you be in favor of degree change as well as a name change from the term "podiatric" to "foot and ankle" medicine?*

**Shin:** I think a new label could be confusing and further separate new graduates from previous generations. This is a small profession, and a name change could further confuse patients and other healthcare professions. **PM**

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**Dr. Haspel** is senior editor of this magazine and past-president of the New Jersey Podiatric Medical Society. He is a member of the American Academy of Podiatric Practice Management.