

It is important to read colors and structures on dermoscopy. The colors mean depth of pigment and the structures are related to anatomical shape of epidermis or how pigmented tumor cells proliferate. The two important features on dermoscopy to differentiate melanoma from nevus are asymmetry of color distributions and asymmetry of structures, but not asymmetry of shape (contour). The basic five colors corresponding to melanin are black, dark brown, light brown, gray and blue. These colors depend on the depth of melanin presence. The colors other than melanin include red (hemoglobin), yellow (lipid) and white (fibrosis, calcinosis, osteosis, hyperkeratosis and cell aggregates). The six dermoscopic structures for melanocytic lesion are pigment network, negative pigment network, angulated lines, globules, streaks and homogeneous blue pigmentation. Of these, pigment network and negative pigment network are related to the anatomical shape of the epidermis. And, other three criteria are related to the pattern of melanocyte proliferation in nests (globules), elongated nests (streaks) or diffuse dermal proliferation (homogeneous blue pigmentation). Global features are most important to judge whether or not the lesion is malignant, based mainly on whether the lesion has a concentric pattern or not. Benign lesions tend to have a concentric global pattern, for example reticular at the periphery and globular at the center. Local features are often important when judging an early lesion of melanoma. It is more important to "use" dermoscope than to "learn" it. A dermoscope is a "stethoscope" for a dermatologist.