ost people take their skin for granted. Sure, we inspect our faces in the mirror every day, searching for blotches and blemishes. We notice when our hands get dry and itchy from indoor heat. We curse broken or brittle nails. And, of course, we wince at cuts and bruises. But when it comes to the vital function of the skin as a respiratory, protective, and sensory organ, few of us non-dermatologists give it much thought.

A recent study in *Pediatrics* (116,5:1105-1113), however, documents the critical role of the skin as a sensory organ. Researchers found that skin-to-skin contact between mothers and premature infants influenced stress. In mothers, skin-to-skin contact led to decreased cortisol levels, decreased heart rates, and improved mood. In infants, cortisol response varied, but heart rate and pain scores decreased. This isn’t the first study to document the importance of touch—especially for infants—but it is yet more evidence of the essential function and influence of skin.

Knowing that touch affects stress, one wonders whether lack of touch affects stress, presumably in a negative direction. For skin diseases like acne or psoriasis that are already linked to stress, does good care actually begin with the dermatologist’s touch? Can contact from the physician—the personal connection—make a difference in the patient’s experience of his or her disease? It seems possible in some cases that taking that extra second to literally reach out to a patient may be more important than writing a prescription.

Speaking of connections, as we round out our second year of publication, I am reminded of the numerous connections we have made with readers, contributors, advisors, and industry supporters over the past several months. Without so many individuals giving generously of time and resources, we would not be able to provide *Practical Dermatology*. Please join me in thanking all those who have contributed to the success of *Practical Dermatology*. And, as we head into a new year, please don’t hesitate to share with me your thoughts about the publication and how we can make it even better.

On behalf of the staff, I wish you happy holidays and success in the new year!