The higher incidence of alopecia in black patients could be partially explained by the fact that there are fewer elastic fibers in black skin to anchor hair follicles to the dermis (Dermatol. Clin. 1988;6:271-81). Chemical and physical hair care practices may also contribute to alopecia, as could the significantly lower total hair density and number of hair follicles in black patients compared with whites (Dermatol. Clin. 2003;21:595-600; Arch. Dermatol. 1999;135:656-8). Racial variations in skin physiology may also lead to differences in eczema prevalence, Dr. Sergay said. The single-center source of information was a limitation of the study, as was potential selection bias from participating physicians, she said, adding that categorization of patient ethnicity by a physician or assistant is less reliable than self-reporting.

MELASMA, A SKIN DISORDER OF THE FACE

Melasma, a skin pigmentation disorder, manifests as dark spots on the face.