Good morning, everyone, and welcome to this special session of the Society of Cutaneous Oncology Journal Club.

Today marks an exciting first for us — this is our first open meeting where we’re welcoming not only our academic colleagues, but also participants from industry. We’re grateful to have you join us, and I anticipate that your presence will broaden the scope of our discussion and bring valuable new perspectives to the table.

As many of you know, SoCO is more than just a journal club — it’s a community. And for any community to grow and make meaningful progress, it has to reach beyond the walls of academia. Our hope is that this kind of engagement helps spark deeper connections and collaboration across the entire field of cutaneous oncology.

With that, let’s begin. Academic participants, please take a moment to introduce yourselves in the chat — your name, institution, and role. And we’ll then ask our colleagues from industry to briefly introduce themselves on screen.

Before we move on, I want to take a moment to preview an important event for our community — the upcoming **International Merkel Cell Carcinoma Symposium**, scheduled to take place next year in Boston.

Depending on how you count, this will be either the 4th or 5th major international meeting focused on MCC. The first was a workshop held in Rockville, Maryland in March 2018, followed by the inaugural symposium hosted by Drs. Vernon Sondak and Ken Tsai at Moffitt Cancer Center in October 2019. That momentum continued with the 2nd Symposium in April 2022, hosted by Dr. Paul Nghiem at the University of Washington, and the 3rd in May 2024, led by Dr. Michael Wong at MD Anderson.

This upcoming symposium — to be hosted by **Dr. Ann Silk and Dr. Isaac Brownell** — promises to continue that tradition. As a member of the planning committee, I can say that we’re building a program designed to explore the emerging science driving MCC, inform clinical practice, and spark innovation across the field.

Of course, to bring this vision to life, we depend on the support of the broader MCC community — including the NIH, philanthropy, and our partners in industry. If you're on today’s call and would be interested in supporting or participating in next year’s symposium, please don’t hesitate to reach out to me or to **Dr. Silk or Dr. Brownell** after today’s session.

**More details, including registration information, will be shared in the coming months.** We hope to see many of you there. Annie or Isaac, anything more to say?

Before we delve into the main paper discussion, I’d like to take a moment to highlight a recent **Perspective on the Science** piece published last week in the *Journal of Cutaneous Oncology*. The article, titled *“The Evolving Role of ctDNA in Merkel Cell Carcinoma: Challenges and Opportunities”*, stems from our SoCO Journal Club session held in March, where we discussed the study by Akaike et al. on ctDNA monitoring for MCC recurrence.

This piece explores how ctDNA could enhance surveillance strategies and inform clinical decision-making in MCC. It also highlights some of the real-world barriers to implementation — including logistical and financial considerations — and underscores the opportunities for future integration into routine care.

We’re especially grateful to the co-authors who helped pull this article together so quickly, and to all the members of our community who filled out the pre- and post-journal club surveys. That input provided a valuable community-level perspective that, in many ways, elevated this beyond a traditional editorial. It reflects our collective voice and shared curiosity around emerging science — and that’s exactly the kind of impact we hope these sessions will continue to have.

If you haven’t had a chance yet, I encourage you to take a look: