GURJIT K. KHURANA HERSHEY, MD/PHD ’92, HS ’97
Alumni Achievement Award

Gurjit K. Khurana Hershey, MD/PhD ’92, HS ’97, is an endowed Professor of Pediatrics at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital (CCH) and the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. She is honored for her internationally recognized research on asthma and allergy.

Hershey has devoted her career to clinical investigation using a combination of epidemiologic, basic, translational, and clinical research to answer fundamental questions regarding the environmental and genetic factors that contribute to the development of childhood asthma and the mechanisms by which these factors interact and contribute to disease. She has been continuously funded for 20 years and has published over 170 articles in top journals. She serves on the National Advisory Allergy and Infectious Disease Council and the Board of Directors of the American Board of Allergy and Immunology. Hershey discovered a mechanistic basis for poor steroid responsiveness in individuals with asthma. This information resulted in the identification of a new potential drug to treat asthma and this drug is now entering clinical trials. She has been the PI of a U19 Asthma and Allergic Diseases Cooperative Research Center for nearly 15 years, and as part of her U19, she is recruiting the first cohort of children with eczema in the US to study the epithelial mechanisms that promote allergic inflammation and allergic disease progression from one tissue to another.

Hershey has established several large cohorts of children that she has followed for over two decades. Using data from a birth cohort, she and her team recently developed a new clinical tool to identify children early in life who are at risk for developing asthma. This tool has been downloaded in over 80 countries and is being used by health care providers worldwide.

In 2004, Hershey was nominated Outstanding Woman in Cincinnati. She also has been recognized with the CCH’s faculty award for Research Achievement as well as the faculty award for Education Achievement at CCH’s Medical Center. She was elected to the American Society of Clinical Investigation. In 2015, she received the World Allergy Organization Scientific Achievement Award for “aiding clinicians worldwide to provide improved patient care.”

Hershey obtained a bachelor’s degree from the University of Iowa in 1985 and medical and doctoral degrees from Washington University in 1992. She was a resident and then fellow at St. Louis Children’s Hospital from 1992–97, then joined the faculty at CCH and the University of Cincinnati. At CCH, she directs the Division of Asthma Research and co-directs the Office of Pediatric Clinical Fellowships. She is also the Director of the NIH funded Medical Scientist (MD/PhD) Training Program at the University of Cincinnati and has trained over 80 trainees.

The Washington University Medical Center Alumni Association is pleased to present its Alumni Achievement Award to Dr. Hershey.