

# Women's Faculty Association Members in the Spotlight

## Amal Assa'ad, MD, Division of Allergy and Immunology

Amal Assa'ad, MD, professor in the Division of Allergy and Immunology at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, received the 2005 American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI) / Sanofi Aventis Women Physicians in Allergy Project Grant Award (\$20,000) presented in March 2005, at the AAAAI meeting in San Antonio, Texas.

The award is given to acknowledge the contributions of a woman to the field of allergy and immunology whether it is in the area of teaching, research or service. The monetary award is given to support a project on which the awardee is working.

Dr. Assa'ad received the award because she is a leading contributor to the work of the AAAAI in teaching and service on a national level. In the teaching contributions, she has been director of the allergy/immunology (A/I) fellowship at Cincinnati Children's, and through that role she has taken a more national role in the teaching of all A/I fellows around the country. Dr. Assa'ad has been the chair of the committee to compile a reading list for the fellows to stay on the cutting edge of science and research. She has been an elected member of the executive committee for the program directors, a committee that paints the broad strokes of the structure of A/I fellowships around the country, and has been an advisory to the AAAAI fellows committee to assist them in



planning their educational seminars during the national meetings. Dr. Assa'ad has also been a speaker at the national meeting and active in the Regional, State and Local Associations, being the elected treasurer and vice-president of the Cincinnati Allergy and Asthma Society, and a member of the board of several organizations that serve allergy patient groups. In addition, she is the vice-chair of the AAAAI Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis committee that participates in the policy making of food labeling and other issues of vital importance to patients with food allergies.

The research project for which Dr. Assa'ad received the award for is titled: 'Eosinophilic esophagitis: immunogenetics of the disorder and pharmacogenetics of therapy with topical steroids'. Dr. Assa'ad's role in the project exemplifies her research role in the division. She is the only full-time clinical faculty in the division and her major area of interest is food allergy and eosinophilic gastro-intestinal disorders. Therefore, she strives to accurately characterize the patient's phenotype and collaborates with the basic researchers in defining pathogenesis and genotypes. The project includes a double-blind placebo-controlled trial of a medication that has been used to treat eosinophilic esophagitis without well-controlled trials to prove efficacy; her research aims to rigorously test the clinical utility of the experimental medication.