Amir Zeki, M.D., wins American Thoracic Society award

The American Thoracic Society (ATS) has presented a $50,000 career development award to Amir A. Zeki, M.D., a fellow in the Department of Internal Medicine's Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine. Zeki was one of eight physicians nationwide named as 2009–10 Fellow Career Development awardees. The awards program, funded by GlaxoSmithKline, furnishes one-year grants of $50,000 to support the research of pulmonary and critical care fellows.

Zeki is investigating potential effects of statins in reducing airway inflammation, particularly in patients with asthma. Nicholas Kenyon, M.D., an associate professor in the Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine who is serving as Zeki’s mentor, said the award is particularly significant for the division.

“This is an impressive award on the national level and a first for us at UC Davis in the Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine. Dr. Zeki showed that it is possible to pursue translational research training through the Clinical and Translational Science Center's Mentored Clinical Research Training Program while completing his specialty fellowship,” Kenyon said. “Amir has forged the way for other fellows in the division.”

Zeki also drew praise from Timothy E. Albertson, M.D., who is chair of the Department of Internal Medicine as well as chief of the Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine.

“My colleagues and I are gratified that the American Thoracic Society so suitably recognized the accomplishments and the dedication of Amir Zeki,” Albertson said. “The research path that Amir is forging is a concrete reminder of the worth of our continual investment in the education mission of this institution. The presence of bright young doctors such as Amir Zeki in our midst is inspiring and edifying, for we learn from them as much as they learn from us.”

Earlier this year, Zeki was among the recipients of the Department of Internal Medicine’s People’s Choice Award, by which the department recognizes the best and brightest of our physicians in training. People’s Choice Award recipients are chosen by voting among Department of Medicine faculty and staff, community supporters and grateful patients.

Dr. Zeki shared enthusiastically, “I was honored and humbled to receive the ATS Career Development Award. Behind any success is not just the individual, but an institution and group of mentors who help make it happen. I am fortunate to have been under the tutelage of great mentors: Dr. Brian Morrissey, Division Chief Dr. Timothy Albertson, and Dr. Fred Meyers have been highly supportive of my endeavors.”