Miller School Researcher Receives Prestigious Triological Society Career Development Award

Mursalin M. Anis, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor of otolaryngology, laryngology, and voice disorders at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, is one of six investigators nationally to receive the Triological Society’s 2021 Career Development Award. The international honorary society is the premier senior clinical organization focused on developing academic careers in otolaryngology.

The award will allow Dr. Anis to help to fund research looking at the genomics of laryngotracheal stenosis, or airway
narrowing.

“The Triological Society award is important seed funding that allows junior faculty like me the opportunity to advance an academic career as a clinician scientist,” said Dr. Anis said.

Individuals with airway stenosis- or narrowing – suffer from shortness of breath and noisy breathing. Ironically, one of the main causes of airway stenosis is from life-saving treatments, such as intubations and tracheostomies. This area of research is especially timely given during the COVID-19 epidemic.

Severe cases can be life threatening. “Airway stenosis was first described and treated at the turn of the 20th century when it was mostly due to infections,” said Dr. Anis.” It was systematically characterized in the 1960s and 70s but continues to be a difficult clinical problem that compromises patients’ breathing.”

Idiopathic subglottic stenosis (ISGS) is another, rarer cause of airway stenosis, primarily affecting women of Northern European ancestry in their 50s. Research into ISGS is promoted by the National Organization of Rare Disorders, which recently recognized University of Miami Health System as a center of excellence.

“We still do not understand why certain people develop airway stenosis or how to prevent it,” Dr. Anis said. “Genomic analysis will help us better understand why some people with risk factors for airway stenosis develop the condition, while others do not.” These insights offer the potential to expedite “This is important diagnosis, help mitigate severe disease,
and lead to less invasive treatments.

Miller School investigators and study collaborators at Temple University in Philadelphia are currently collecting samples. Combined, the samples from Philadelphia and South Florida will be highly diverse, representing Hispanic, non-Hispanic White, and Black populations. The study will also look at the interplay of genomics and biology in the development of airway stenosis.

“To receive the Triological Society’s extremely competitive Career Development Award is a high honor,” said Fred Telischi, M.D., chair of otolaryngology, professor of otolaryngology, neurological surgery, and biomedical engineering at the Miller School. “It reflects the great respect for and national recognition of Dr. Anis’s research and his career trajectory.”

“His pursuit of the genetic underpinnings of laryngotracheal stenosis aims to improve our understanding and treatment of this challenging clinical situation in upper airway management.”