



# NEWS

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## **The American Society of Human Genetics Honors Dr. Haig Kazazian as 2008 Allan Award Recipient** *University of Pennsylvania Professor Haig H. Kazazian Honored as 2008 Allan Award Winner at the ASHG 58th Annual Meeting in Philadelphia*

BETHESDA, MD – October 15, 2008 – Dr. Haig H. Kazazian, Jr., M.D., Seymour Gray Professor of Molecular Medicine in Genetics at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, will receive the American Society of Human Genetics' (ASHG) Allan Award at the Society's 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, which will be held November 11-15, 2008 in Philadelphia.

Founded in 1948, ASHG is the primary professional membership organization for human genetics specialists worldwide, representing nearly 8,000 researchers, academicians, clinicians, genetic counselors, nurses and others with a special interest in this area. The Society's Annual Meeting is the world's largest gathering of human genetics professionals and a forum for renowned experts in the field.

The Allan Award recognizes substantial and far-reaching scientific contributions to human genetics, carried out over a lifetime of scientific inquiry and productivity. One of ASHG's longest-standing awards, the Allan Award was established in 1961 in memory of William Allan, who was one of the first American physicians to conduct extensive research in human genetics.

"I feel incredibly grateful and proud to be named as the recipient of this year's Allan Award," Kazazian said. "Receiving this prestigious acknowledgement from my colleagues in the human genetics field is a tremendous honor."

According to Joann Boughman, Ph.D., executive vice president of ASHG, "Dr. Kazazian was chosen as the 2008 winner of the Allan Award for his outstanding and tireless contributions to the field of human genetics, both as a well-respected researcher and academician, and as an exemplary teacher and mentor."

Throughout his career as a genetic scientist, Dr. Kazazian has made numerous seminal contributions in understanding and deciphering mechanisms that cause mutations leading to human disease. One such mechanism that he discovered is called a transposable element, or "jumping gene," which is a segment of DNA that can move around to different positions in the genome of a single

cell and cause mutations. In his lifetime of scientific discoveries, Dr. Kazazian's revolutionary research has had a significant impact on unraveling the genetic causes of human disease. His discoveries have benefited the public health by informing the creation of new and improved methods for diagnosing and treating genetic conditions.

Furthermore, Dr. Kazazian was also named as this year's Allan Award recipient because of his active involvement in training and mentoring the next generation of basic science and clinical human genetics researchers. Dr. Kazazian's exemplary efforts in this area have earned him an impressive record of former trainees who have gone on to become outstanding genetic scientists and academicians at the top medical schools throughout the world. Seven of his former students were previous recipients of ASHG Student Awards.

The Society recognizes the significant achievements of the Allan Award winner by honoring the recipient with a \$10,000 prize and an engraved medal. *The 2008 Allan Award will be presented to Dr. Kazazian in a formal ceremony at the ASHG 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting that will take place on Friday, November 14, 2008 at 1:30 p.m. in the Philadelphia Convention Center, Hall A.*

Immediately after receiving his award, Dr. Kazazian will deliver the [Allan Award Address](#). In his presentation, "On Jumping Fields and 'Jumping Genes,'" Dr. Kazazian will discuss two of the major discoveries that he has had in his career. First, he found that because of linkage disequilibrium, there is an association of chromosome haplotypes with disease-causing mutations. This linkage disequilibrium can be very helpful in characterizing the mutations in any single-gene disorder. His second discovery was that transposable elements are active in present-day human beings and when they "jump" they can cause disease. A manuscript of the 2008 Allan Award Address will be published in an upcoming issue of the [American Journal of Human Genetics \(AJHG\)](#).

For more information about the 2008 Allan Award presentation, please visit the ASHG Annual Meeting Web site at: <http://www.ashg.org/2008meeting/pages/sessionlisting.shtml#sess45>.

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## **ABOUT THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HUMAN GENETICS**

Founded in 1948, The American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG) is the primary professional membership organization for human genetics specialists worldwide. The nearly 8,000 members of ASHG include researchers, academicians, clinicians, laboratory practice professionals, genetic counselors, nurses and others involved in or with a special interest in human genetics.

The Society's mission is to serve research scientists, health professionals and the public by providing forums to: (1) share research results through the Annual Meeting and in [The American Journal of Human Genetics \(AJHG\)](#); (2) advance genetic research by advocating for research support; (3) educate future genetics professionals, health care providers, advocates, teachers, students and the general public about all aspects of human genetics; and (4) promote genetic services and support responsible social and scientific policies. For more information about ASHG, please visit: <http://www.ashg.org/>.

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## **ASHG 2008 PRESS INFORMATION & ONLINE MEETING REGISTRATION**

For more information about ASHG's press guidelines and policies, as well as details about this year's press briefing sessions, live webcasts of ASHG media events, and speakers and experts available for interview, please visit: <http://www.ashg.org/2008meeting/pages/press.shtml/>.

Complimentary meeting registration will be available to members of the media who provide appropriate press credentials and identification. To pre-register to attend the ASHG 2008 Annual Meeting, please complete the online press registration form at the following Web site URL: [http://www.ashg.org/2008meeting/pages/press\\_register.shtml/](http://www.ashg.org/2008meeting/pages/press_register.shtml/).

For general information on the ASHG 58th Annual Meeting, visit: <http://www.ashg.org/2008meeting/>.

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