

Perera to discuss maternal exposures to the fetus in distinguished lecture

By Monica Frazier

The NIEHS Distinguished Lecture Series will feature a talk Jan. 13 by grantee Frederica Perera, Dr.P.H., Ph.D., of Columbia University. Her presentation, “The Fetal Window of Susceptibility: Using Molecular Epidemiology to Understand the Role of Prenatal Environmental Exposures on Child Health and Development,” will be hosted by NIEHS and National Toxicology Program Director Linda Birnbaum, Ph.D.

Perera

(<http://www.mailman.columbia.edu/our-faculty/profile?uni=fpp1>)

is professor of environmental health sciences, and director of the NIEHS-funded [Columbia Center for Children’s Environmental Health](http://ccceh.org/)

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, as well as the Disease Investigation Through Specialized Clinically-Oriented Ventures in Environmental Research ([DISCOVER](http://www.nih.gov/news/pr/dec2007/niehs-27.htm)

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) Center. She is a leader in the field of molecular epidemiology, and focuses her research on exposures during early life, including the effects of prenatal exposures on development.



Perera is the author of more than 200 publications, including new research, funded by NIEHS, linking ADHD and air pollution. (Photo courtesy of Frederica Perera)

Linked Video

[**Watch as Perera discusses her studies and the way that better understanding of gene and environment interactions can translate into strategies for prevention \(06:20\)**](#)

“Dr. Perera’s talk will no doubt attract a large audience at NIEHS,” Birnbaum said. “Her work is of considerable interest to many of our scientists, and directly relevant to the institute’s public health mission and the goals of our strategic plan.”

Perera investigates her hypotheses about environmental exposures through the use of prospective cohort studies, where people who share a common characteristic are studied over time. In Perera’s case, a group of some 720 women are being studied to look for relationships between environmental exposures during pregnancy and long-term effects of the prenatal environment on their children, with an emphasis on preventing adverse health effects and later onset of adult disease.

Perera has received numerous honors, including the Children’s Environmental Health Excellence Award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2005, and the Children’s Environmental Health Network Award in 2008, for her pioneering work in molecular epidemiology in cancer as well as early life exposures.

(Monica Frazier, Ph.D., is an Intramural Research Training Award fellow in the NIEHS Mechanisms of Mutation Group.)

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