

Congratulations / Félicitations



Charu Kaushic, PhD
Professor, Department of Medicine, McMaster University;
Scientific Director, CIHR Institute of Infection and Immunity
(CIHR-III)

The 2026 CSI – Bernhard (Hardi) Cinader Award Recipient

Presentation: “Finding Meaning in Science: A Journey from Immunology to Women’s Health, Impact and Equity”

Dr. Charu Kaushic is a tenured Full Professor in the Department of Medicine at McMaster University and the Scientific Director of the CIHR Institute of Infection and Immunity (CIHR-III). Dr. Kaushic is also a member of the McMaster Immunology Research Centre and Michael G. DeGroote Institute of Infectious Disease Research in McMaster University. She is viral immunologist who is internationally recognized for her research in sexually transmitted diseases.

As Scientific Director of CIHR-III, she oversees strategic investments in infection and immunity research across Canada and represents the Government of Canada at national and international forums. Dr. Kaushic received her PhD in Immunology and completed a post-doctoral training in mucosal immunity. For past 25 years she has led a robust interdisciplinary research program at McMaster University that focuses on better understanding host-pathogen interactions that influence women's susceptibility and immune responses to sexually transmitted viral infections, particularly HIV and herpes simplex virus. The goal of her research program is to develop gender-specific prevention and therapeutic approaches, such as vaccines and immunomodulatory interventions, to address the disproportionate burden of STIs on women worldwide. Her program also aims to empower women with the knowledge and tools necessary to make informed decisions about their reproductive health. Her research covers a broad spectrum from basic research to clinical and translational projects and has been supported continuously for past 25 years by multiple grants from CIHR, the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), the Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN), and the Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research (CANFAR). Dr. Kaushic has done extensive teaching in immunology and mentored more than 60 trainees in her lab.

Dr. Kaushic has received numerous national and international honours in recognition of her research excellence and leadership, including the OHTN and CIHR New Investigator Award, American Society of Reproductive Immunology Senior Investigator Award, OHTN HIV Applied Research Chair and CANFAR Leadership Award. Dr. Kaushic was inducted into the Government of Canada’s *Women of Impact in Canada* online gallery, and in 2022, she was elected as a Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences.

Dr. Kaushic is a passionate advocate for equity, diversity, and inclusion in science and firmly believes in community-centred research. She is especially dedicated to mentoring and supporting young women and individuals from underrepresented groups in pursuing careers and leadership roles in STEM fields.