$P2Y_2R$ Prompts Cardiac Progenitor Cell Activation (p 1224)

Dr Farid G. Khalafalla is currently a postdoctoral fellow in Dr Mark Sussman's laboratory at San Diego State University, conducting research into unraveling purinergic signaling in murine cardiomyocytes and human cardiac progenitor cells derived from heart failure (HF) patients. Farid earned his BS in Pharmaceutical Sciences from the School of Pharmacy, Cairo University, Egypt, and he continued his research career in the United States by pursuing a PhD in Biochemistry under the supervision of Dr Gary Weisman at the University of Missouri-Columbia. His graduate research focused on the role of $P2Y_2$ nucleotide receptor ($P2Y_2R$) in salivary gland regeneration. Farid's lifelong passion for scientific research was inspired by his father, Dr Galal Khalafalla, a professor of Microbiology at Cairo University. Farid's goal is to establish an independent research career with emphasis on studying cellular responses to extracellular nucleotide stress signals in the myocardium and developing novel translational approaches for treatment of HF. In his spare time, Farid enjoys attending lectures in Islamic studies, playing soccer, and traveling with his friends, family, and 6-month-old baby.

Regulatory Elements in iPSCs and Somatic Cells (p 1237)

Dr Mingtao Zhao grew up in China and earned a BS in Biological Science in Northwest A&F University. He then moved to the United States to pursue his PhD studies under the mentorship of Dr Randall Prather at the University of Missouri, where he studied embryonic development, somatic cell nuclear transfer, and epigenetics. Subsequently, he joined Dr Joseph Wu's laboratory at Stanford University for postdoctoral training under the lab motto "work hard, work smart, and work together." His research focuses on genetic and epigenetic regulation of cardiac and vascular differentiation in normal development and diseased condition. His long-term goal is to translate the discovery in the lab using human iPSCs and ESCs to uncover novel therapeutic targets for cardiovascular diseases in the clinic. Outside the lab, he is the father of two wonderful kids. He spends his spare time jogging, reading, and enjoying life with his family in the beautiful San Francisco Peninsula.

CBSCs Preserve Structure and Function After MI (p 1263)

Dr Thomas Sharp earned his BA in Neuroscience at Drew University, and his PhD in Physiology from Temple University. His dissertation work, under the mentorship of Dr Steven R. Houser in the Cardiovascular Research Center at the Lewis Katz School of Medicine, focused on the translational application of a novel stem cell population as therapy to combat classical pathological remodeling observed after acute myocardial infarction. Dr Sharp is currently a postdoctoral fellow at LSU Cardiovascular Center of Excellence under the mentorship of Dr David J. Lefer. His research interests are focused on the translation of novel strategies and therapeutics to combat cardiovascular disease, specifically as they pertain to acute myocardial infarction and heart failure. Dr Sharp is motivated by the opportunity to perform work which will move ideas from the bench to the bedside, allowing clinicians and patients new and improved therapeutic techniques and more efficacious therapies to combat heart disease. Outside the laboratory, Tom enjoys running, cycling, traveling, craft beer, and always looks forward to spending time with family and friends.

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Meet the First Authors

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Cell Dosing in Ischemic Cardiomyopathy (p 1279)

Dr Victoria Florea is currently a postdoctoral fellow in Dr Joshua Hare's laboratory at the Interdisciplinary Stem Cell Institute, University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. She earned her MD from the State Medical and Pharmaceutical University "Nicolae Testemitanu," Chisinau, Moldova. Victoria's current research is focused on preclinical and clinical studies with stem cells for cardiovascular diseases. Victoria is interested in studying safety and efficacy of stem cells, and the mechanisms involved in ischemic and nonischemic cardiomyopathy. When not working, Victoria enjoys spending time with family, reading, jogging, and playing guitar.

Cell Dosing in Ischemic Cardiomyopathy (p 1279)

Dr Angela C. Rieger is currently a postdoctoral fellow in Dr Joshua Hare's laboratory at the Interdisciplinary Stem Cell Institute, University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. She earned her MD and began her academic pursuits at University of La Sabana, Colombia. She then moved to the United Kingdom where she completed an MS in Nanotechnology and Regenerative Medicine at University College London. Her MS research focused on investigating methods to improve the endothelialization of vascular grafts. Given her enthusiasm for translational and clinical research, she joined Dr Hare's laboratory where she has honed her skills using large animal models to study cardiac diseases and acquired expertise in cardiac imaging analysis for preclinical and clinical studies. Angela's current research is focused on developing stem cell therapies for improvement of cardiac structure and function in heart failure. During her leisure time, she enjoys traveling with her family, discovering new worlds, and engaging in outdoor activities.

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