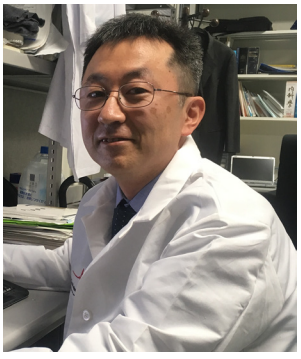
Metabolism and DNA Methylation (p 31)

Dr Francesco Spallotta is a senior postdoctoral fellow at Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main (Germany), working in Dr Gaetano's lab in the Division of Cardiovascular Epigenetics. He earned his MSc in Medical Biotechnology and his PhD in Experimental Medicine at Sapienza University, Rome (Italy). Since 2005, he is actively working in the field of epigenetics to elucidate new molecular mechanisms involved in human diseases. Recently, he started broadening his scientific horizons, attempting to characterize the link between metabolic alterations and epigenetic enzyme function in the context of metabolically altered environments and in the presence of the so-called "hyperglycemic memory." To this aim, he took advantage of integrative bioinformatics analysis of multi-OMIC data derived from cardiac mesenchymal cells isolated from type 2 diabetic donors. For this study, the Functional Genomics Translational Biology (FGTB) council awarded him the FGTB Young Investigator Award during American Heart Association Scientific Session 2016 in New Orleans. His research goal is to shed light on novel epi-metabolic mechanisms underpinning human disease. During his leisure time, he enjoys wine tasting. He loves travelling around the world, going to vinyl shops looking for rarities, and supporting his Italian soccer team, "AS Roma."

Natural Killer Cells and Atherosclerosis (p 47)

Dr Wared Nour-Eldine earned an MS in Molecular Biology from the Lebanese University, Lebanon, in 2013, and a PhD in Immunology from Paris Descartes University, Paris, in 2017. Her dissertation research, conducted under the supervision of Dr Alain Tedgui, focused on the role of natural killer (NK) cells in atherosclerosis. She has found that in the resting state, NK cells have no role in disease progression. Dr Nour-Edline believes that, "in the world of research, nothing is expected; you should believe in what you find." She is currently applying for postdoctoral positions in translational immunology in France, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Her thirst for the truth has kept her going despite all surprises. Her favorite quote is, "truth might be bitter, but its outcome is sweet; falsehood appears to be sweet, but it is poisonous in its essence," by Imam Ali. In her free time, Wared enjoys reading.



Altered Mitochondrial Dynamics in Lipotoxic Hearts (p 58)

Dr Kensuke Tsushima's father is a cardiologist, which contributed to his interest in the field. He earned his MD and PhD from the University of Tokyo. He completed his Internal Medicine Residency at the University of Tokyo Hospital and the Japan Railway General Hospital in Tokyo, and trained in Clinical Cardiology at Sakakibara Heart Institute in Tokyo. Three years after becoming an Assistant Professor in Cardiovascular Medicine at the University of Tokyo, Dr Tsushima traveled across the Pacific to the University of Utah, where he joined Dr Dale Abel's lab as a postdoctoral fellow. He moved to the University of Iowa when the lab relocated to Iowa City. Dr Tsushima is interested in the mechanisms of myocardial adaptation to physiological and pathological stimuli. The work shown in the present publication afforded an opportunity to link changes in mitochondrial metabolism with cardiac pathophysiology. While medical school and residency posed their unique obstacles, Dr Tsushima believes that his greatest challenge was to complete the body of work that will form the basis for his independent research career. However, he has been fortunate to work with committed mentors who have helped him achieve his goals. Now that he has returned to Japan as an Assistant Professor at the University of Tokyo, his main focus is to obtain independent funding to continue his studies. Dr Tsushima enjoys spending time with his wife and 3 children and during their time in Utah, was frequently seen skiing in Utah powder. He is a fan of Japanese baseball and once drove from Salt Lake City to San Francisco to see Japan play.

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Meet the First Authors

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Tfam Role in Cardiomyocyte Development (p 74)

Dr Donghui Zhang is currently a professor in the College of Life Science at Hubei University in China. She earned her BE in Biotechnology from Xi'an Jiaotong University and her PhD, focusing on hIPSC differentiation, in Dr Hongkui Deng's lab at Peking University. After completing her education, she moved to the USA to pursue postdoctoral training in Dr Nenad Bursac's lab at Duke University and Dr William Pu's lab at Harvard Medical School. Her research goal focuses on using IPSC-derived cardiomyocytes to make in vitro micro tissue models to mimic the cardiomyocyte's damage and recovery process, in order to understand the mechanism of cardiomyocyte's proliferation and maturation. In her free time, she enjoys watercolor painting and scientific schematic diagram design. While conducting the research and writing this manuscript, Dr Zhang delivered her second child and obtained her current academic position at Hubei University. She hopes to be a good mentor to her students by aiding them in discovering their own research interests and furthering their careers, as her mentors have done for her.

Cell Cycle Activity and Cardiac Cell Therapy (p 88)

Dr Wuqiang Zhu completed 2 years of Internal Medicine residency, 4 years of General Cardiology fellowship, and 1 year of Interventional Cardiology fellow training in China. During this clinical practice, he developed a passion for basic research in the cardiovascular sciences. Upon obtaining his PhD from Indiana University School of Medicine (Advisor: Dr Loren J. Field), he obtained his postdoctoral research training at Northwestern University (Mentor: Dr Gangjian Qin) and the University of Minnesota (Mentors: Dr Jop van Berlo and Dr Jianyi [Jay] Zhang). He is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Biomedical Engineering at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. His research focuses on stem cell biology and myocardial regeneration. His long-term goal is to develop a myocardial regeneration strategy that can be applied to clinical medicine. Outside of the lab, he spends most of his time with his family. He also enjoys traveling, hiking, and cooking.

Sex Hormones, Carotid Plaque Composition, and Stroke (p 97)

Marija Glisic is completing her PhD in Epidemiology and Internal Medicine at Erasmus Medical Center, Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Her mentor is Dr Oscar H. Franco. She earned her MSc in Clinical Epidemiology at the Netherlands Institute for Health Sciences, while her MD was obtained at the University of Belgrade in Serbia. Marija is investigating the associations between sex hormones and various cardiometabolic diseases. She is also involved in several experimental studies in the field of vascular aging. After she completes the PhD in Epidemiology, Marija is planning to pursue a postdoctoral position to further investigate the underlying mechanisms of sex differences previously observed in cardio-metabolic diseases. She hopes to contribute more to the global understanding of gender differences in aging-associated diseases and help people to age better. Marija is almost 2000 km away from home, her family, and from delicious food. Perhaps that's the reason she is happy with spending weekends at the lab. In her free time, she enjoys reading, watching movies with her friends, going to the gym, and traveling.

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