

Research Interests

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The main interest of Dr. Chang's laboratory is primarily translational, focusing on the immune mechanisms of viral persistence and liver disease progression in patients infected with hepatitis C virus (HCV), an RNA virus with high rate of persistence (50-80%) and chronic necro-inflammatory liver disease that can progress to liver cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma. In particular, she is investigating the role that antiviral T cells play in the outcome of HCV infection and identifying and characterizing the relevant immunological features (e.g. quantity, phenotype, cytokine profile, kinetics antigen specificity) of successful HCV clearance or liver disease progression. Her studies are based on clinical samples from valuable cohorts of persons with distinct clinical and virological outcome. The results of this study will be useful in future therapeutic approaches to prevent chronic infection, and liver disease progression to cirrhosis and liver cancer.

Interactions with other trainers: Dr. Chang interacts with Drs. Robertson, Lieberman, Li and Fuchs as well as others on a regular basis. She participates in training students and postdoctoral candidates in the Tumor Virology Program, attends meetings and participates on committees of students in the program.