
Beatson Foundation and Helmsley Awardees

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Beatson

Qizhi Tang and **Gregory Ku** have been named two-of-the five recipients of the 2021 "Passion to Find a Cure" Award, which provides grants for outstanding biomedical researchers in Type 1 Diabetes. [Qizhi Tang](#) will fortify Tregs to restore immune tolerance in autoimmune diabetes, and [Gregory Ku](#) will look at whole genome CRISPR screens in primary human pancreatic beta cells to identify new regulators of survival and proliferation.

The Beatson Foundation seeks to fund innovative research to better understand and find a cure for Type 1 Diabetes, with areas of highest priority being beta cell transplantation and regeneration, autoimmunity issues, diabetes-related complications and management of T1D using devices. Past awardees include Matthias Hebrok, Julie Sneddon, and Audrey Parent. Diabetes Center is grateful for their ongoing support.

Helmsley

Qizhi Tang has also been awarded a \$1M grant from the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust to engineer islet antigen-specific Tregs for T1D. The Trust's goal is to improve the lives of all people living with T1D by working closely with key players across the T1D ecosystem—patients, physicians, caregivers, researchers, government agencies, funders, pharmaceutical companies, device makers, insurers, and community organizations.

"Ever since we discovered in the early 2000s that single infusion of regulatory T cells led to the lifelong cure of diabetes in mice, we have been actively translating the therapy to patients by building a clinical regulatory [T cell therapy program](#). We have conducted two trials in T1D to show this approach is feasible and safe. With the support of these grants, we aim to develop next-generation regulatory T cell therapy with enhanced efficacy" said Qizhi Tang, who is Director of the [UCSF Transplantation Research Lab](#) in the Department of Surgery, and expected to join the core faculty at Diabetes Center this year.

The Helmsley Trust seeks to improve care and ultimately prevent the disease, and have made and committed almost \$700 million in grants to date.

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