Rheumatology Young Investigator Program

Supporting a new generation of rheumatology researchers and ensuring the future of treatment-focused investigations at Yale.

Yale has a history of innovative translational rheumatology and immunology research that is addressing the most challenging questions in the treatment and cure of autoimmune diseases such as lupus and rheumatoid arthritis. Through our rheumatology team’s leading-edge basic, clinical, and translational research, we are gaining a better understanding of the causes and complexities of autoimmune diseases and guiding scientific discoveries and innovations from the lab to the clinic.

Young faculty in the Section of Rheumatology at Yale School of Medicine, under the tutelage of senior investigators, bring new transformative ideas that propel the field forward. Some key areas in which they have made important contributions and continue to probe include:

- Identification of therapeutic targets in autoimmunity and arthritis.
- Dissection of the mechanisms underlying the inflammatory response.
- Determination of the genetic underpinning of inflammation in arthritis and related diseases.

Recruiting and retaining innovative and dedicated young investigators is critical to the future of Yale’s rheumatology research program. Supporting them in the early stage of their careers is essential. Our Young Investigator Program provides this vital support—serving as a powerful tool that is helping us achieve our mission to improve the lives of people with autoimmune conditions.

Goals

The Young Investigator Program has three core goals:

- To support innovative young rheumatology researchers through the formative stage of their research careers.
- To mentor young investigators to work in collaborative, multidisciplinary research teams across departments and disciplines at Yale and in the broader scientific community.
• To retain the best research faculty at Yale who will become the next generation of innovators and national leaders in translational research that will transform the treatment of autoimmune diseases.

Because rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, and related autoimmune diseases affect over 1 in 50 people in the United States, it is imperative that we cultivate outstanding, innovative young investigators in this field.

Leadership

**Joseph Craft, MD**

Dr. Craft is the chief of the Section of Rheumatology, Paul B. Beeson Professor of Medicine, and professor of immunobiology at the Yale School of Medicine. He is also director of the Yale Investigative Medicine Program, a unique program providing PhD training for physicians. He has been immersed in rheumatology-related research for more than 30 years, receiving support from the National Institutes of Health, where he is a two-time MERIT awardee, and authoring numerous scientific publications. He directs a laboratory at Yale devoted to understanding lymphocyte differentiation and function in lupus and related illnesses. Dr. Craft is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, chair of the Executive Committee of Lupus Clinical Investigators’ Network, and former chair of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Alliance for Lupus Research (now the Lupus Research Alliance) and the Medical and Scientific Committee of the Lupus Foundation of America’s Connecticut chapter. He is also a co-founder of L2 Diagnostics, a biotechnology company formed in partnership with Yale.

**Richard Bucala, MD, PhD**

Dr. Bucala is deputy chief of the Section of Rheumatology and professor of medicine, pathology, and epidemiology and public health. He studies the mechanisms by which protective immune responses lead to immunopathology, focusing on MIF-family cytokines and their genetics, which his group first cloned and characterized experimentally. His laboratory is leading multidisciplinary efforts to develop immunotherapies tailored to an individual’s genetic makeup. An anti-MIF developed by the group is undergoing clinical testing in oncology, and an anti-MIF receptor antibody, recently FDA approved, is under evaluation in systemic lupus erythematosus. Dr. Bucala also is credited with the discovery of the fibrocyte, which is being targeted therapeutically in different fibrous disorders. He is a co-founder of Cytokine Networks and of MIFCOR, a biotechnology startup. Dr. Bucala was elected to the American Society for Clinical Investigation and the Association of American Physicians. He is the editor-in-chief of *Arthritis & Rheumatology* and has served on numerous advisory boards in the public and private sectors.

You Can Make a Difference

Your philanthropy can help the Young Investigator Program expand and develop its recruitment of and support for outstanding innovative young investigators. To learn more, please contact Erin Shreve in the Office of Development at (203) 436-8529 or erin.shreve@yale.edu. Thank you for your interest.