Determining How the Immune System Becomes Exhausted

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Anjana Rao, PhD (Damon Runyon Fellow ’79), and **James Scott-Browne, PhD (Damon Runyon Fellow ’11–’13)**, at the La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology, La Jolla, and colleagues, are focusing on a key issue of how tumor-fighting T cells can lose their effectiveness or become “exhausted.” The researchers identified two proteins, NFAT and Nr4a, that can bind to the DNA of T cells and shut down their tumor-fighting activity. Next steps will be to determine if these processes can be interfered with or reversed in order to re-motivate immune cells to eradicate a patient’s tumor. These results were published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Science.

Read more about this research here.
