

# KL2 Visiting Scholars Seminar Series

## "Targeting FOSL1-Super-enhancers Eliminates Cancer Stem Cells in Head and Neck Squamous Cell Carcinoma"

**DATE:** Wednesday, June 8, 2022

**TIME:** 12:00 - 1:00pm EST

**WHERE:** Zoom



### Keynote Speaker: Dr. Jiong Li

Dr. Jiong Li obtained his Ph.D. Degree from the Institute of Biochemistry and Cell Biology, Chinese Academy of Sciences. Dr. Li then received post-doctoral training in molecular signaling and Drosophila development in Dr. Cadigan's lab at the University of Michigan and continued training in the area of oncogenic signaling at the UCLA, School of Dentistry, mentored by Dr. Cun-Yu Wang. After several years at UCLA, Dr. Li relocated in 2018 to the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in the Department of Medicinal Chemistry as an Assistant Professor.

### Abstract

Although significant progress has been made in understanding the self-renewal and pro-tumorigenic potentials of cancer stem cells (CSCs) in HNSCC, a key challenge remains on how to eliminate CSCs and halt metastasis effectively. We show that FOSL1-Super-Enhancers (FOSL1-SE) play a critical role in the transcription of cancer stemness and pro-metastatic genes, thereby controlling the tumorigenic potential and metastasis of HNSCC CSCs. Targeting FOSL1-SEs with specific small molecule inhibitors eliminates CSCs and suppresses tumorigenesis and metastasis of HNSCC. Our study suggests that FOSL1-SEs may serve as novel and effective therapeutic targets for eliminating CSCs, and our novel FOSL1 inhibitors may be tailored for clinical intervention.

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