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| **Name** | **Rafi Ahmed** |  |
| **Affiliation** | Emory University |
| **Official Position** | Professor |
| **Education** | 1974 M.S., Idaho State University, Pocatello, ID  1981 Ph.D., Harvard University, Cambridge, MA | |
| **Major Career**  **(less than**  **5 items)** | 1988 - 1992 Associate Professor, UCLA School of Medicine  1992 - 1995 Professor, UCLA School of Medicine  1995 - Present Georgia Research Alliance Eminent Scholar in Vaccine Research and Professor, Emory University  2000 - Present Associate Director, Emory University  2010 - Present Charles Howard Candler Professor, Emory University | |
| **Biography**  Dr. Rafi Ahmed, a member of the National Academy of Science, is a world-renowned immunologist whose work during the past decade has been highly influential in shaping our current understanding of memory T cell differentiation and anti-viral T and B cell immunity.  The long-term goal of Dr. Ahmed's research is to understand the mechanisms of B and T cell immunological memory and to use this information to develop new vaccines for the prevention and treatment of disease. The Ahmed laboratory uses highly sophisticated cellular and molecular techniques to study antigen-specific immunological memory in murine, primate, and human systems.  A major area of focus is identifying cellular molecules that regulate the generation and maintenance of CD8 and CD4 T cell and humoral immunity. One such molecule is mTOR that we recently identified as a major regulator of memory CD8 T cell differentiation.  Another area of focus is to develop strategies to restore function in virus-specific T cells during a chronic viral infection such as HIV or Varicella-zoster virus (VZV). A key breakthrough by the Ahmed laboratory several years ago demonstrated the striking differences in memory CD8 T cell differentiation during acute versus chronic viral infection resulting in the identification of the inhibitory receptor, PD-1, as a major mediator of T cell dysfunction during chronic infection.  This work has directly translated into human clinical studies where PD-1 antibody blockade has since been used to treat both chronic infection and cancer. We are currently working on additional inhibitory receptors we have identified and also the roles of CD4 follicular helper T cells, memory B cells, and antibody play during chronic viral infection. | | |

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