

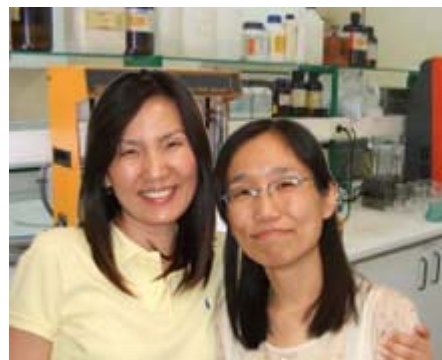
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Hyesook Yoon and Dr. Jihun Lee College of Medicine

Two researchers, from Seoul, Korea at the FSU College of Medicine have been researching under Dr. Michael Blaber, Professor of Biomedical Studies, protein engineering of human acidic fibroblast growth factor (FGF-1) and the characterization of kallikrein, an enzyme that since its discovery has been quite mysterious.



Hyesook Yoon's research as a graduate student has pertained primarily to the characterization of the psychological functions of kallikrein. Kallikrein is involved in most bodily functions such as digestion, blood clotting, and immunity to name a few. The characterization of this particular enzyme has been increasing significant over the past few years because something in its make-up may directly apply to the detection of cancer, thus acting as a biomarker. Yoon relays that her interest in this particular field of research came about by reading articles on the severity of cancer, and the numerous amounts of people struck with it yearly. "I just wanted, in some way, to contribute to this cause because it is such a grave one and because with enough people on board, we could really see a positive change come about."

Dr. Jihun Lee, Postdoctoral Research Associate, focuses on the study FGF-1. By using FGF-1 as a model, Lee and her cohorts hope to understand protein folding, stability and structure. The modification of this particular protein has produced "remarkable functional consequences, including dramatically enhanced functional properties," according to Dr. Blaber. Lee uses the example of a patient suffering from heart disease. The injection of the enhanced protein into the heart can help re-grow blood vessels there more rapidly, thereby assisting the healing process.

"The ability to alter a human protein is a miraculous thing," notes Lee on the reason why she chose this particular field of research, "considering that the change could possibly be used to help a terminally ill patient and because it's right there in the human body!"

Lee and Yoon plan on continuing their research in medical studies.

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