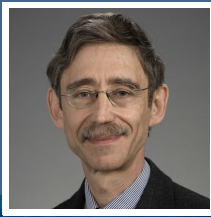


# Targeting the Onset of Autoimmune Diseases



Keith Elkon

Professor of Medicine and Adjunct Professor of Immunology

## CURRENT RESEARCH

Identifying the causes of autoimmune diseases like lupus and developing novel and effective treatments

While lupus affects more than 200,000 US cases per year and researchers tirelessly work to improve its diagnostics and treatments, there is still a major unmet medical need in this field with only one new drug approved by the FDA in the last 50 years. Such autoimmune diseases are especially challenging to treat because they involve as many as 30-40 genetic variants that conspire to make the person's immune system respond abnormally. Dr. Keith Elkon, Professor of Medicine and Adjunct Professor of Immunology at the University of Washington, looks at the most proximal, basic mechanisms responsible for initiating the autoimmune diseases like lupus, to impact new and more effective forms of therapy. With 30 years of experience in complex immunology that includes multiple steps in pathogenesis, Dr. Elkon inspired many original discoveries, one of which resulted in a UW startup company dedicated to removing the harmful immune complexes in lupus. Dr. Elkon and his colleagues were instrumental in developing a biological drug, which is now in Phase 2 clinical trials for lupus. Currently, his team is working on a new small molecule drug that they hope to test in the near future.

Normally, a virus infecting cells will release nucleic acids and prompt the body to produce inflammatory proteins called cytokines, one of which is interferon, which then stimulates the immune system to get ready for battle. Most studies now agree that the overexpression of type 1 interferon is a major abnormality observed in three quarters of lupus patients as well as in patients with related autoimmune diseases such as scleroderma, polymyositis, and primary Sjogren's syndrome. Collaborating with computer scientists, medicinal...

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## AFFILIATION



University of Washington

## EDUCATION

- M.D. in 1974, University of the Witwatersrand Medical School, South Africa

## AWARDS

- Rockefeller Brothers Clinical Scholarship
- NIH Research Career Development Award
- NIH Immunological Sciences Study section
- Medical and Scientific Advisory Board, Arthritis Foundation Great Northwestern Region
- Immediate Past President of the Henry Kunkel Society

## RESEARCH AREAS

Life Science, Immunology / Inflammatory

## FUNDING REQUEST

Your contributions will support the continued research of Dr. Keith Elkon at the University of Washington as he studies the causes of lupus and develops treatments. Donations will help fund the \$250K/year required to support personnel, animal models, and equipment. With your generosity, Dr. Elkon and his team will be able to accelerate clinical trials and move one step forward towards preventing severe inflammation inflicting pain and organ damage on many.