

Katja Simon is Professor at Oxford University and Principal Investigator at the Kennedy Institute of Rheumatology, studying autophagy and cell fates in the hematopoietic and immune system. She trained as an Immunologist under Avrion Mitchison at the DRFZ Berlin and showed in her PhD that TH1 cytokines are found in excess in rheumatoid arthritis (EULAR Award). As a postdoc at the Centre d'Immunologie Marseille Luminy, she investigated transcription factors regulating thymic cell death. During her second postdoc in Oxford she pursued her interest in cell fate, studying cell death molecules in thymic selection, inflammation and tumour immunity. As a Principal Investigator, she turned her attention to autophagy, the main conserved cellular bulk degradation pathway, and discovered that autophagy maintains healthy red blood cells, stem cells and memory T cells. It promotes differentiation and prevents ageing of the hematopoietic system. She is a Wellcome Trust investigator.