

Stefano Piccolo is Professor of Molecular Biology at the University of Padua Medical School and group leader at IFOM. He carried out pathfinding discoveries in the field of growth factor signaling, cancer and metastasis. He studies how cells communicate with each other adapting to tissue needs, and how corruption of cell-cell and cell-extracellular matrix interaction leads to cancer emergence and progression. His single, most pioneering contribution has been the discovery that cells use the transcription factors YAP/TAZ to translate information they receive from the physical and structural features of their microenvironment, their own shape and cytoskeletal organization. By using a combination of experimental approaches, Piccolo has then delineated key roles of YAP/TAZ in stem cells and cancer, contributing to the current view that these factors are essential as stem cell determinants, for tissue regeneration and tumorigenesis. For his scientific accomplishments, he has been honored by several awards.