



## RESEARCH TOPIC MEM2

# Investigating UBE3A-dependent sumoylation imbalance in the pathogenesis of the Angelman syndrome and autism

### Curriculum MEM Standard

#### Laboratory name

Pharmacology and Brain Pathology Lab, Humanitas University

#### Pre-clinical Supervisor

Michela Matteoli

[michela.matteoli@hunimed.eu](mailto:michela.matteoli@hunimed.eu)

Matteo Fossati

[matteo.fossati@humanitasresearch.it](mailto:matteo.fossati@humanitasresearch.it)

#### Abstract

Neurodevelopmental disorders (NDD) affect millions of people in the world and are a major socio-economic burden. Given the complex multifactorial origin of these diseases, the pathogenetic mechanisms are poorly understood and no effective therapies are available. This research program focuses on two NDDs caused by genetic alterations of UBE3A gene. Loss of UBE3A causes the Angelman syndrome (AS), characterized by developmental delay, intellectual disability and epilepsy, while increased levels of UBE3A are associated with autism. This project combines *in vivo* genetic tools with proteomics and advanced imaging to dissect the pathogenesis of AS and autism. The relevance of our observations will be also validated in human neurons from differentiated induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs) obtained from AS patients. This project will uncover novel pathogenic insights into the development of AS and autism and hopefully offer new perspectives to treat these as yet incurable diseases.

#### Main technical approaches

- Proteomics
- Biochemistry
- molecular biology
- *in vivo* manipulation of gene function
- confocal and super-resolution microscopy



### **Scientific references**

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Angelman Syndrome: From Mouse Models to Therapy. 2020 Neuroscience 445:172-189.

Vatsa N. and Jana NR. UBE3A and Its Link With Autism. 2019 Front Mol Neurosci. 11: 548

Flotho A. and Melchior F. Sumoylation: a regulatory protein modification in health and disease. 2013 Annu Rev Biochem 82: 357-85

### **Type of contract**

PhD scholarship of € 18.000 gross per year awarded by Humanitas University. This sum is exempt from IRPEF income tax according to the provisions of art. 4 of Law no. 476 of 13th August 1984, and is subject to social security contributions according to the provisions of art. 2, section 26 and subsequent sections, of Law no. 335 of 8th August 1995 and subsequent modifications.

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