



FENG ZHANG joined the Broad Institute as a core member in January 2011 with an interest in studying the role of genetic and epigenetic mechanisms underlying the development of disease, specifically focusing on illnesses of the nervous system. As a graduate student at Stanford University, Zhang worked with

adviser Karl Deisseroth to invent a set of technologies for dissecting the functional organization of brain circuits. The researchers used light-sensitive proteins from green algae and other microbes to develop a new “optogenetic” toolbox for controlling the activity of neurons in live organisms with light.

Zhang served as a Junior Fellow at Harvard’s Society of Fellows and did postdoctoral research using synthetic biology to study the patterns of gene activity during brain development, a topic with implications for neurological and psychiatric problems. At the Broad, Zhang takes a synthetic biology approach to understand the development of neuropsychiatric disease. His laboratory is developing novel genome engineering technologies aimed at perturbing and modifying the genome to see if observed variants mimic defects in animal models, and discover whether those are necessary and sufficient for disease.

In addition to his position at the Broad, Zhang is an assistant professor at MIT with a joint appointment in the Departments of Brain and Cognitive Sciences and Biological Engineering. He is also an investigator at the McGovern Institute for Brain Research at MIT.

Zhang received his A.B. in chemistry and physics from Harvard College and his Ph.D. in chemistry and bioengineering from Stanford University.

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