

# Yicheng Gao

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## Education

**Tongji University (1985, 211), Shanghai, China**

Sep. 2020 – Mar. 2026

*Bioinformatics PhD student, supervised by Prof. Qi Liu*

**Technical University of Munich & Helmholtz Munich, Munich, Germany**

Aug. 2025 – Feb. 2026

*Visiting Scholar, supervised by Prof. Fabian J. Theis*

**Huazhong Agricultural University (211), Wuhan, China**

Sep. 2016 – Jun. 2020

*Bachelor of Bioinformatics (Outstanding Graduates), supervised by Prof. Wen Zhang*

## Main Research Experience

**Causal disentanglement for single-cell data**

2025

*Advisor: Dr. Dongsheng Li and Dr. Caihua Shan*

*Mircosoft AI/ML Group*

- Develop a new causal disentanglement representation framework for single-cell data, called CausCell.
- Propose a new optimization objective function for this framework.
- CausCell is implemented based on PyTorch and achieved superior or comparable performance on disentanglement and reconstruction, deployed on github <https://github.com/bm2-lab/CausCell>.
- Paper is accepted on [Nature Communications](#).

**Single-cell genetic perturbation prediction**

2024

*Advisor: Prof. Qi Liu*

*Tongji University*

- Develop a new subtask decomposition-based genetic perturbation prediction model, called STAMP.
- Propose a three-subtasks-based benchmark evaluation strategy.
- STAMP is implemented based on PyTorch and achieved superior or comparable performance in this task, deployed on github <https://github.com/bm2-lab/STAMP>.
- Paper is published on [Nature Computational Science](#).

**Multi-modal representation for T-cells**

2023

*Advisor: Prof. Qi Liu*

*Tongji University*

- Develop a new low-resource-aware multi-modal representation learning for cross-modality integration and analysis of T-cell receptor and T-cell transcriptomes in a unified way, called UniTCR.
- UniTCR is used for an array of downstream tasks, including single modality analysis, modality gap analysis, epitope-TCR binding prediction and cross-modality generation task.
- UniTCR is implemented based on PyTorch and achieved superior or comparable performance in these tasks, deployed on github <https://github.com/bm2-lab/UniTCR>.
- Paper is published on [Cell Genomics](#).

**Peptide-TCR binding modeling**

2022

*Advisor: Prof. Qi Liu*

*Tongji University*

- Develop a new meta-learning framework combined with the ideas of meta learning and neural turning machine (NTM) for tackling the peptide-TCR binding prediction task, called PanPep.
- Based on the NTM, we propose a disentanglement distillation module for generalizing few-shot learning to the zero-shot learning.
- PanPep is implemented with PyTorch and achieved SOTA performance in this task, deployed on github <https://github.com/bm2-lab/PanPep>.
- Paper is published on [Nature Machine Intelligence](#).

## Selected Publications

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- **Causal disentanglement for single-cell representations and controllable counterfactual generation**  
Yicheng Gao\*, Kejing Dong\*, Caihua Shan, Dongsheng Li, Qi Liu  
*Nature Communications*, 2025
- **Toward subtask decomposition-based learning and benchmarking for genetic perturbation outcome prediction and beyond**  
Yicheng Gao\*, Zhiting Wei\*, Kejing Dong, Jingya Yang, Guohui Chuai, Qi Liu  
*Nature Computational Science (Research Highlight)*, 2024
- **Unified cross-modality integration and analysis of T-cell receptors and T-cell transcriptomes**  
Yicheng Gao\*, Kejing Dong\*, Yuli Gao, Xuan Jin, Qi Liu  
*Cell Genomics (Featured Article)*, 2024
- **Pan-Peptide Meta Learning for T-cell receptor–antigen binding recognition**  
Yicheng Gao\*, Yuli Gao\*, Yuxiao Fan, Chengyu Zhu, Zhiting Wei, Chi Zhou, Guohui Chuai, Qinchang Chen, He Zhang, Qi Liu  
*Nature Machine Intelligence (Research Highlight, ESI highly cited)*, 2023
- **Delineating the cell types with transcriptional kinetics**  
Yicheng Gao, Qi Liu  
*Nature Computational Science*, 2024
- **Weakly-supervised peptide-TCR binding prediction facilitates neoantigen identification**  
Yuli Gao\*, Yicheng Gao\*, Siqi Wu\*, Danlu Li, Chi Zhou, Fangliangzi Meng, Kejing Dong, Xueying Zhao, Ping Li, Aibin Zhang, Qi Liu  
*Cell Systems*, 2025
- **Weakly-supervised peptide-TCR binding prediction facilitates neoantigen identification**  
Zhiting Wei\*, Duanmiao Si\*, Bin Duan\*, Yicheng Gao\*, Qian Yu, Ling Guo, Qi Liu  
*Nucleic Acid Research*, 2024

## Selected Honors and Awards

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- Chinese Association for Artificial Intelligence (CAAI) **Potential Qingyuan Scholar** (15 people in China), 2025
- Shanghai Interdisciplinary Innovation Foundation for Intelligent Science & Technology (50K RMB), 2025
- **National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC)** Support for PhD student (300K RMB), 2025
- **Academic Pioneer Award** at Tongji University (Top 0.05%), **ranked 1st**, 2024
- **Stars of Tomorrow** in Microsoft Research (Top 10% interns in MSR), 2024
- **National scholarship** for PhD students in China (Top 0.2%), 2024
- **National scholarship** for PhD students in China (Top 0.2%), 2023
- Tongji University **Scholarship for Outstanding Ph.D. Freshman** (Top 5%), 2020
- **Top Ten Students** of Huazhong Agricultural University (Top 0.1%), **ranked 1st**, 2020
- The 9th MathorCup University Mathematical Modeling Challenge, **First Prize**, 2019

## Intern Experience

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Microsoft | AI/ML group Research Intern

Dec. 2023 – Oct. 2024

- Mentors: [Dr. Dongsheng Li](#) and [Dr. Caihua Shan](#)
- Disentanglement representation method design for single-cell data
- Accepted on Nature Communications

BGI Genomics | Algorithm Engineer

Jul. 2020 – Sep. 2020

- Algorithm optimization for detection of structural variation

BGI Genomics | Algorithm Engineer

Jul. 2019 – Sep. 2019

- Algorithm optimization for detection of SNP variation.