

Suzanne L. Epstein, PhD

Suzanne Epstein received her BA in chemistry from Harvard University in 1972, and her PhD in biology from MIT in 1979, with thesis work in immunology. She did postdoctoral research in immunology at the National Cancer Institute. In 1985, she came to the FDA Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research as a researcher-reviewer. She currently serves as Associate Director of Research for the Office of Cellular, Tissue, and Gene Therapies, a research management role, in addition to her work in research and regulatory review.

Her FDA regulatory responsibilities have included review of investigational new drug (IND) applications in multiple areas including cellular and gene therapies, service on a licensing committee and inspection team, and policy development in cell and gene therapy.

Since 1991 her research at CBER has been in the field of immunity to influenza virus infection. Her lab is studying “universal” vaccinations in animal models that use conserved antigens to protect broadly against influenza A viruses, including avian H5N1 strains, and swine-origin flu. The group explores mechanisms of such cross-protective immunity, including systemic and mucosal antibody and T cell responses. This type of vaccine strategy does not require advance strain identification or prediction, and so could fill public health gaps during unexpected outbreaks and pandemics.