

Dr James Ussher (Microbiology) 2008 RCPA Foundation Research Award

Project title: New recombinant adeno-associated virus vectors as potent T-cell vaccines. To develop a novel form of bicistronic rAAV as a vaccine vector allowing the synchronous expression of an antigen and an immunostimulatory molecule.

“I received the grant during my PhD looking at the optimising recombinant adeno-associated virus (rAAV) as a vaccine vector. The grant enabled me to pursue a speculative project to try and improve the immunogenicity of rAAV through the inclusion of various genetic adjuvants. While this approach was ultimately unfruitful due to various unsurmountable technical hurdles, it enabled me to further my skills as a research scientist. Upon completion of my PhD I undertook a three year post-doctoral post at the University of Oxford. I have recently returned to a joint clinical and academic position at Southern Community Laboratories and the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. The award of an RCPA grant has assisted in my development as a research scientist.”