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About

James Last is a postdoctoral Research Fellow in the School of Cancer Sciences working in the laboratory of Professor Malcolm Taylor.

Qualifications

- PhD in Cancer Sciences, University of Birmingham 2005
- BSc (Hons) in Molecular Cell Biology, University of Nottingham 1998

Biography

James qualified with a BSc (Hons) in Molecular Cell Biology from the University of Nottingham in 1998. Following this, he undertook a technician post in the Department of Cancer Studies in 1999, working in the laboratory of Professor Malcolm Taylor.

In 2000, James went on to study for a PhD in the same laboratory, studying the kinase activity of different mutant ATM proteins. After he graduated in 2005, James took up a postdoctoral position in Professor Taylor's lab where he continues to study ataxia telangiectasia (A-T) and related disorders to A-T and their impact on DNA repair.

Teaching

- BMedSci (tutorials)
- MBChB BMS 2nd year (SGT)

Research

The main emphasis of James' work is studying the function of the ATM gene, mutated in the autosomal recessive neurodegenerative disease ataxia telangiectasia (A-T). A-T patients show a complex phenotype including neurodegeneration, radiosensitivity, immunodeficiency but also an increased predisposition to the development of tumours, particularly of lymphoid origin.

The severity of the A-T phenotype shows variation and part of James' work over the last 12 years has been to show a clear relationship between residual ATM kinase activity and a less severe clinical phenotype in A-T patients. Another aspect of his work helped establish that female carriers of ATM mutations are at an increased risk of developing breast cancer and that A-T patients themselves also have a higher risk of developing breast cancer than the normal population.

Several other neurodegenerative disorders share phenotypic similarities with A-T, including ATLD and the more recently discovered AOA1 and AOA2. James' work over the last 6 years has been to identify UK AOA1 and AOA2 patients.

Part of James' ongoing work is to help screen for A-T, AOA1 and AOA2 patients, as well as for patients with novel disorders similar to A-T.

Publications

Albertyn, C., Cawley, N., Taylor, A.T., Srinivasan, V., Last, J.I., Murphy, R.P. (2010) POG02 Variant ataxia telangiectasia in siblings with normal {alpha}-fetoprotein levels. J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry 81 (11), e48.

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Meyer, S., Kingston, H., Taylor, A.M.R., Byrd, P.J., Last, J.I., Brennan, B.M., Trueman, S., Kelsey, A., Taylor, G.M., Eden, O.B. (2004) Rhabdomyosarcoma in Nijmegen Breakage Syndrome: strong association with perianal primary site. Cancer Genet Cytogenet. 154 (2), 169-174.

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