

Lucy Durham – Awarded November 2017

Statement of impact from MRC Flexible Supplement Fund award

“These courses have given me a strong foundation in a variety of disciplines”

I am very grateful to have been awarded MRC Flexible Supplement Funding which I used to attend three training courses.

The first was the “focused ultrasound course on hands, wrists and feet in Rheumatology” at Canterbury Christchurch University. I learned the theory and practice of musculoskeletal ultrasound and had the opportunity to perform ultrasounds on patients with inflammatory arthritis. Following the four days of hands-on training I am now in the process of completing 120 hours supervised scanning at Guy’s Hospital. On completion of the course I will have a formal qualification in musculoskeletal ultrasound. This experience and qualification is invaluable for me to perform ultrasound-guided synovial tissue biopsies, a technique that will be necessary for me to collect patient samples for my PhD project. It will also be useful for my future career in Rheumatology.

The second course was the “mass cytometry training course” run by the NIHR BRC Flowcore. This course gave me the technical knowledge and practical experience required to optimise a panel of metal-conjugated antibodies to phenotype mononuclear cells isolated from ultrasound-guided synovial tissue biopsies.

The third course was a two week Bioinformatics course at Cambridge University. I was taught basic programming languages and how to analyse DNA sequencing data from initial quality control, to alignment, variant calling and network analysis. This knowledge has already been useful in analysing the T cell receptor sequencing data that I generated as part of my PhD project.

If I had not been awarded MRC Flexible Supplement Funding I would not have had the opportunity to attend these three varied and high quality training courses. These courses have given me a strong foundation in a variety of disciplines and have already been of benefit to my PhD.