

Viruses at Monash

A long productive period of research in arboviruses and particularly flaviviruses began with the appointment EG Westaway in 1968 (Westway 1968 -1989). Initially serology and protein synthesis were the focus, and the work progressed to obtaining the sequence of the Kunjin virus genome. PJ Wright was appointed in 1976 (Wright 1976-2009), initially to work with Kunjin virus, but then his studies were expanded to dengue virus. In 1994 he commenced investigations into noroviruses (Norwalk-like viruses) in collaboration with JA Marshall at the Virus Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratories. Other viruses studied during the time of Westaway and Wright by PhD students and post-doctoral appointees included Sindis, West Nile, rubella and influenza viruses, several bunyaviruses, carnation mottle virus, and mushroom bacilliform virus. Upon the retirement of EG Westaway, AD Davidson was appointed (1993 to 2000). He was successful in developing an infectious clone of dengue virus type 2, which was a necessary major advance in the study of RNA viruses at this time. He also was active in studying the plant potyviruses. HJ Netter joined the department in 2002 with a research focus in viral hepatitis and established a research program to assess the interaction of virus-like particles (VLP) with the immune system, including the VLP ability to serve as platform for the delivery of foreign antigenic sequences.