

Louis Barnett Prize 2025

Finalists profiles



Dr Cameron Wells

Abstract title: Failure to Rescue' after Gastrointestinal Cancer Surgery: a driver of hospital variation, ethnic inequities, and a target for quality improvement in Aotearoa



Dr Cameron Wells is a General Surgery Trainee at Hastings Hospital and PhD Candidate at The University of Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. His PhD research focuses on 'failure to rescue' following postoperative complications and the use of wearable devices to monitor and identify deteriorating patients. His research is funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand, and the New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment.

As a medical student, Cameron completed an intercalated Bachelor of Medical Science (Honours) degree investigating the mechanisms of postoperative ileus. More broadly, his research interests include medical devices, perioperative care, recovery, and surgical outcomes.

Cameron helped introduce trainee-led collaborative research networks to Australasia, being the national lead for Aotearoa New Zealand in the IMAGINE and GlobalSurg-3 studies. More recently, he has been a steering committee member for the POSTVenTT, CHOLENZ, and OPERAS studies. He has been a mentor to the student-led TASMAN Collaborative and is a current member of the STRATA Collaborative executive committee.

He is a previous recipient of the DCAS Award (2014), New Zealand Junior Doctor of the Year (2019), the Health Research Council of New Zealand Clinical Research Training Fellowship (2021), the Surgical Research Society Young Investigator Award (2022), and is a previous president of the Australasian Students' Surgical Association (2018). Cameron has published extensively, with 91 peer-reviewed publications and 2 book chapters to-date.

Dr Jamie-Lee Rahiri (Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara, Te Ātihaunui-a-Pāpārangi)

Abstract title: Revealing the Surgical Evidence Gap: Māori Health, Equity, and the Call for Responsive Research in Aotearoa



Dr Jamie-Lee Rahiri is a General Surgery trainee and internationally recognised researcher who is transforming surgical care for Māori in Aotearoa. Her pioneering work addresses inequities in surgical outcomes and reframes how conditions like obesity are understood and managed from a surgical perspective, driving more culturally informed care.

Recently honoured with the Dr John Corboy Medal and a L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Fellowship, Jamie-Lee's leadership unites clinical excellence, research innovation and community engagement to inspire systemic change and equity in healthcare.

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Dr Sam Hale

Abstract title: The anaesthetic efficacy of tetracaine and oxymetazoline compared with Co-phenylcaine in healthy individuals



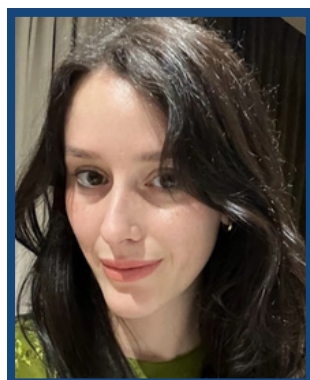
Sam is an Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery trainee. He completed a BMedSc (Hons) with first class honours in 2010, investigating the surface anatomy of the central veins, and his MB ChB in 2013 at the University of Otago.

Sam was awarded an Academic Surgeon Scientist Research Scholarship from the Garnett Passe and Rodney Williams Memorial Foundation starting in 2021, supporting him to undertake doctoral research investigating topical treatments for biofilm infection in chronic rhinosinusitis.

He is supervised by Professor Richard Douglas in the University of Auckland Department of Surgery. The goal of this research is to develop a novel topical antiseptic preparation with potent antibiofilm effects that can be safely applied to the nasal mucosa, in order to improve symptom control and reduce disease severity in cases of recalcitrant chronic rhinosinusitis following surgery.

Dr Sarah Hunter

Abstract title: Deprivation, Ethnicity, and Eczema: Understanding Associations for Childhood Bone and Joint Infection



Dr Sarah Hunter is a trainee orthopaedic registrar and clinical fellow with the Health Research Council of New Zealand. Her primary research focus is childhood musculoskeletal infection, particularly the inequitable disease burden experienced by Māori and Pacific children.

She is currently completing a PhD with the University of Auckland which considers the question: 'why are some children more likely to experience invasive osteomyelitis or septic arthritis? and following from this, 'what can be done to reduce our unacceptable rates of disease?'.

Dr Sam Lynskey

Abstract title: Clinical Biomarker Shoulder Study: Transcriptomic differences between inflammatory conditions of the shoulder: osteoarthritis and rotator cuff tears – The SHOaW Study



Dr Samuel Lynskey is an orthopaedic surgeon and recent Fortius Knee Fellow at the Fortius Clinic, London, under Andy Williams and Simon Ball, where he was involved in the care of elite Premier League footballers, international rugby players, and other professional athletes. He is a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and the Australian Orthopaedic Association, and works as a consultant at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne and South West Healthcare, Warrnambool. He is finalising a PhD at Deakin University exploring transcriptomic signatures in shoulder osteoarthritis and rotator cuff disease, with four peer-reviewed publications to date. His clinical interests span knee and shoulder surgery, sports injuries, and joint replacement, with an academic focus on biomarker-guided precision approaches to degenerative shoulder disease.

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Dr Anna McDonald

Abstract title: Paediatric multifocal musculoskeletal sepsis and the aftermath: a 15-year review of health outcomes



Anna is a SET 2 Trainee in Orthopaedics. Prior to training, she was a Starship Foundation Research Fellow for 12 months. She completed a Masters with first class honours, creating a 10-year Starship Osteomyelitis Database and studying the long-term outcomes of paediatric musculoskeletal infections. It has been well received when presented at meetings, led to publication, awards and proudly, the creation of the Starship Osteomyelitis Pathway - a treatment guideline for staff. As a trainee, Anna has worked in Southland and Dunedin Hospitals, continuing to study this topic locally, providing relevant insights and aiming to highlight how we best manage children with musculoskeletal infection in the regions.