

Oscar Fernandez-Capetillo honoured by the Eppendorf Young Investigator Award

Madrid, October 29th 2009. Oscar Fernandez-Capetillo (Bilbao, 1974), Head of the Genomic Instability Group at the Spanish National Cancer Research Centre (CNIO), has been awarded the 2009 *Eppendorf Award for Young Investigators*.

The Prize was initiated 15 years ago in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the company Eppendorf and aims to recognize the scientific careers of investigators younger than 35. The Prize is supported by a partnership with the scientific journal *Nature* (<http://www.nature.com/nature/awards/eppendorf/index.html>), which has made it one of the most prestigious awards for young investigators working in Biomedical Sciences. Oscar Fernandez-Capetillo is the first Spanish person to win this award.

Oscar initiated his scientific career at the University of the Basque Country under the supervision of Dr. Ana Maria Zubiaga working with mouse models of autoimmune disease. He is particularly grateful to Dr. Zubiaga from whom he learnt the rigor to do and a taste for quality science. He then moved to the National Cancer Institute in the US to develop his postdoctoral research in the laboratory of Dr. André Nussenzweig. It was there that he started his research on the mechanisms that safeguard genome integrity. Since he joined the CNIO as a Junior Group Leader in 2004, his work has been focused on investigating how the machinery that repairs DNA damage is also key to protect against cancer and ageing. For instance, one of his recent projects has discovered that the prenatal exposure to DNA damage can determine the onset of ageing later in life. Based on this and other work from Oscar's group, he is now trying to exploit this knowledge for the development of novel cancer chemotherapies.

The prize consists of a medal and 15,000 Euros which will be awarded during a gala dinner in the German city of Düsseldorf on November 19th.