

## **Circulating tumor cells in patients with pancreatic cancer**

The Sol Goldman Pancreatic Cancer Research Center

The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore, USA

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Through my recent research for the Dutch Pancreatic Cancer Group I came into contact with Dr. Wolfgang, the current chief in pancreatohepatobiliary (HPB) surgery of the Johns Hopkins Hospital. After several emails and Skype-conversations, he offered me to join his lab in Baltimore for a 6-month research period and help him and his team set up a longitudinal study looking at circulating tumor cells in patients with pancreatic cancer. After a painful and probably recognizable process of obtaining the correct paperwork, paying the myriad of fees and paying the consulate in Amsterdam a visit (without mobile phone!), I set out on my US adventure.



As a medical student, I had never really worked in a proper lab before. When setting foot in the lab for the first time, I must admit the sheer size and amount of unfamiliar instruments was pretty daunting. However, with the enthusiastic help of my colleagues I was out pipetting and centrifuging within no time. To feel part of such a large and productive research institute worked extremely motivating. I enjoyed my place and work within Dr. Wolfgang's lab so much he offered me to return as a "post-doc" after my medical school graduation to continue working on circulating tumor cells and other forms of liquid biopsy in patients with pancreatic cancer as part of my PhD-thesis. Without much hesitation, I took him up on his offer and will thus return to Baltimore for another two years.

A secondary factor that led me to enjoy my time here as much as I did, and will continue to do so in the future, is the opportunity to further explore the US. Whether you like small or larger trips, nature or culture the US has so an almost infinite amount of attractions and interesting places to discover.

I could recommend anyone coming here for a research internship. If you are interested in doing research at Johns Hopkins, do not hesitate to contact me at: [vgroot1@jhmi.edu](mailto:vgroot1@jhmi.edu)!