

Vesal Yaghoobi

Born: Iran

Currently: Yale School of Medicine, New Haven, Connecticut



When I was 11 years old, I knew I wanted to be a scientist. Over summer break, when everybody was on vacation, I stayed home and read our science textbook. I would just sit and read that book until I memorized it. I fell in love with biology and joined the Biology Olympiad program at my school. I got the second highest score in Iran!

My passion for science never dimmed. I applied and was accepted to medical school - but I would go to the lab unable to do groundbreaking work because we had no funding. Scientists in Iran need to fund their own research. Even with this limiting system, they are able to do good work, I can only imagine what they would be capable of with sufficient funding!

Knowing this I applied to a master's program at John Hopkins. I moved to the US when I was 26 years old, without knowing a single soul. My parents were not able to accompany

me and the last time I could go to Iran was March 2016. Even now, my family cannot visit me and I cannot visit them, which feels very isolating.

I am currently doing my postdoc at Yale. I would love to work in the area of detecting dormant malignant cells in the body - which are the cause of late recurrence and metastasis in many types of tumors. I want to find a way to detect these cells in the body of the general population, so that they can be effectively treated, which would ideally reduce the risk of cancer overall.