

COACHING THE RISING STARS OF CANCER RESEARCH

Cancer Research UK's Dr Amit Roshan explains how Meyler Campbell's coaching programme has allowed him to take his leadership skills in the field of cancer early detection to the next level.

Cultivating the next generation of scientific leaders is a major priority for Cancer Research UK (CRUK). Through the CRUK Future Leaders programme, the charity offers a broad range of funding schemes to cater to all stages of a researcher's career, from PhD programmes for recent graduates to fellowships for established scientists looking to develop their own research groups.

The Mastered practice coaching is helping to support scientists who will go on to make transformative, life-saving discoveries. Meyler Campbell is incredibly proud to be part of this effort.

Dr Amit Roshan is part of our first cohort. A CRUK-funded clinician scientist based at the charity's Cambridge Institute, Amit plays a vital role in driving the development of discoveries in the lab into new treatments and tests for people with cancer. Acting as a bridge between laboratory research and the clinic, clinician scientists like Amit see the challenges in treating and caring for people with cancer first-hand, which motivates and informs their research.

"At first, I was sceptical of the value of one-to-one coaching," Amit admits. "I was curious to see how a coach with little prior experience with healthcare or academia could help me with my long-term goals."

But he now says these concerns were *"unfounded"* and that there is a tendency within his field to overlook important non-academic skills. *"The coaching has allowed me to recognise and develop leadership and organisational skills that will be instrumental to further progress in my field,"* he explains. *"Discussing these goals with someone outside of my immediate circle of research mentors was not the obvious way to develop as a clinician scientist but it has been very valuable."*

So, would he now recommend the coaching to a colleague?

"Yes, absolutely," Amit says. *"It's a fantastic opportunity that all fellows should be offered. I found it particularly useful when I was beginning to develop diverse research teams. The ability to take stock of certain situations with a coach meant I could identify challenges and opportunities early."*

If you would like to coach a CRUK scientist as a practice client, or as a Mastered graduate offer pro-bono coaching, please get in touch with [Sophie Ford](#) at Meyler Campbell.

For further information about Amit's essential work, please read on.

Detecting cancer earlier to save more lives

Amit works with melanoma patients and is developing methods to detect the disease at the earliest stages – when surgery can be curative and the positive health impact for patients is the largest – along with the Rosenfeld Group at the CRUK Cambridge Institute. As part of this initiative, he is building teams at the hospital and the university in collaboration with international and commercial partners, to develop a simple

blood test to detect early-stage melanomas that are currently undetectable by any other means. Excitingly, the Rosenfeld Group has recently published findings that show the blood test can be 10 times more effective than current methods. The test is now being validated in hospital patients.

Breakthroughs in early detection will revolutionise how we approach cancer and have a transformational impact on survival, because detecting cancer at an early stage means it is more likely to be treated successfully. For example, when bowel cancer is diagnosed at the earliest stage, more than 90% of people survive their disease for at least five years, while at the latest stage this drops to 10%.

To tackle this global problem, CRUK has launched ACED, the International Alliance for Cancer Early Detection, which connects the Canary Center at Stanford University and the Knight Cancer Institute at Oregon Health & Science University with CRUK's Centres of Excellence in Manchester, London and Cambridge, where Amit works. Each centre contributes unique intellects, technologies and ideas which previously would have operated in isolation or competition. ACED will accelerate progress in this critical research field through collaboration and ultimately help CRUK improve cancer survival.

Together we will beat cancer

Meyler Campbell faculty member, Ann Orton, has supported CRUK for many years and was instrumental in fostering our practice coaching relationship with the charity. *"I support CRUK because I'd like to see a future where cancers are caught earlier so that fewer people have to endure invasive treatments with potential long-term side effects."*

Ann has recently contributed to CRUK's urgent appeal to get cancer research back on track following the COVID-19 outbreak. The charity is facing a 30-35% decline in income this financial year – approximately £160m. CRUK funds approximately 50% of all cancer research in the UK, and although CRUK has done all it can to reduce operational costs, it has been forced to cut research funding by £44m. Ann says:

"No other UK charity or government department is set up to deliver what CRUK can. If CRUK cannot deliver this research, no one else will. CRUK desperately needs our help to get cancer research funding back on track, protecting progress already made and enabling breakthroughs. If we do not act now, we risk a lasting and significant impact on this pioneering research."

If you are interested in finding out more about supporting CRUK's emergency appeal, please contact [Ann Orton](#).

Meyler Campbell will also be hosting a webinar with CRUK in the autumn. More details to be announced soon.