



DR CATHERINE POINTER



RESEARCH FELLOW OF EXPERIMENTAL CANCER MEDICINE

CANCER RESEARCH TRIALS

"I love that I am improving cancer treatments to help more people than ever. I work on the front line of turning ideas into reality."

Academic profile

Degree

BSc Biomedical Science

Post grad

MRes Cancer Sciences, PhD
Cancer Sciences

Qualification/achievement you are most proud of

PhD Cancer Sciences

Subjects you enjoyed at school

Textiles, Drama and Science

Career Summary

As a child, the idea of being a scientist seemed exciting but because it wasn't my best subject at school, I assumed I couldn't do it. At the start of year 10 I was diagnosed with blood cancer. In hospital I had lots of questions about my treatment.

My doctors would answer my questions as best they could, but there would always come a point where the answer would be "no one knows, that's what research is trying to find out".

I remember thinking perhaps I could be the one who works it out one day. Even though I missed year 10 and a year of A levels after the cancer relapsed, I really felt my experiences made me more qualified to become a scientist! Once I recovered, I worked hard and didn't let anything stop me

What inspired you?

I always wanted to know how the human body worked. It's the one thing we all have in common! I wanted to know the real, detailed answers and I liked the idea of working in a lab and doing experiments too. When I was 14 I thought because science wasn't my best subject, and I wasn't a straight A* genius, that I wasn't good enough to be a scientist. But when I was ill myself, I saw how real-life science worked. I also saw where things needed improving! I realised doctors and scientists were normal people who had just worked hard for a common cause and it really inspired me to have a career where I could get my answers and change medicine for the better.

Describe your job



Did you know

... the 'white blood cells' of your immune system aren't just one type of cell? There's a whole hierarchy of types and sub-types of white blood cells, each with an essential role. Together they make an expert team that keep you safe.

Top tip

Just because you're having a tough year, doesn't mean you should let it ruin the next 60. Learn from the hard moments and use them as reason to fight for better.

Best thing about my job

Continually learning how the human immune system works and using it to make medicine better!

Find out more

- [Southampton ECMC](#)
- [Cancer Research UK](#)
- [Southampton CRUK twitter feed](#)

Watch the video:

