

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Rakhee Bajaj, Ph.D.

Strategy and Business Development Manager

Sathgen Therapeutics/Godavari Biorefineries Limited
Mumbai, India

Bridging the gap

Rakhee Bajaj, Ph.D., has had a passion for making a meaningful impact through biomedical research since her eighth-grade teacher told her that DNA is the code to life and the code can be deciphered. From that moment forward, Bajaj worked to learn the intricacies of genetics and discover the influence of genetic factors on disease and drug development.

Bajaj earned a Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from Michigan State University and a Master of Science in Human Genetics from the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor before making her way to the MD Anderson UTHealth Houston Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS).

In addition to her lab activities during her time at the GSBS, Bajaj completed a tutorial with the Investigational Cancer Therapeutics department under the guidance of Funda Meric-Bernstam, M.D., chair of the department, and served as the MD Anderson student representative on the Student Advisory Council of The University of Texas System. In 2022, Bajaj earned her Ph.D. in Cancer Biology from the GSBS, and subsequently, she accepted a role as the manager of strategy and business development at Sathgen Therapeutics and Godavari Biorefineries Limited in Mumbai, India.

Bajaj credits her tenure at MD Anderson for nurturing her expertise in cancer research and drug development that now allows her to bridge the gap between scientific discoveries and their commercial applications.

“My tenure at MD Anderson proved instrumental in cultivating this expertise, where I immersed myself in cancer research and drug development. Notably, my internship with the Investigational Cancer Therapeutics department provided invaluable exposure to planning, managing, and effectively coordinating clinical trials,” Bajaj said. “In addition, being part of the Student Advisory Committee propelled me beyond my comfort zone, enabling me to refine my managerial and leadership skills.”

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Bajaj now relies on those professional and leadership skills to facilitate the release of potentially lifesaving therapies for cancer patients.

“My role entails fostering connections with pharmaceutical companies keen on licensing our cutting-edge anti-cancer drugs and leading them to market success,” Bajaj said. “Additionally, I actively engage in investor relations, collaborating with private equity firms and venture capitalists eager to invest in the dynamic landscape of cancer drug discovery.”

She also encourages current and prospective MD Anderson trainees and students to fully embrace the opportunities available at the institution, in the Texas Medical Center and in Houston.

“MD Anderson and Houston present an extensive array of opportunities spanning from fundamental research to translational drug development, consulting, technology transfer, and commercialization,” Bajaj said. “Make the most of your time there by exploring the diverse facets of the health care sector both inside and outside the lab. Tutorials serve as an invaluable avenue for gaining insights into your preferences. The Texas Medical Center is a rich source of information; engage with professors, doctors, students, postdocs, and staff to fully capitalize on this wealth of knowledge. Do not waste this opportunity!”

When asked what additional advice she followed during her time as a trainee, Bajaj added, “Find the thing outside of lab that brings you joy, whatever it may be; find the time to take a break and do those things!”

She continues to follow this advice by enjoying activities in her free time, including solving jig-saw puzzles, cooking, traveling, hiking and trying new restaurants in Mumbai.

Want your spotlight to be featured?

[Click here](#) to complete the questionnaire.

Not a member of the MD Anderson Alumni portal?

[Click here](#) to join.