

Turning research advances into innovative medicines ^[1]

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Daniel Rooks never knew how perfectly he had prepared for a role in translational medicine. When he entered the field for the first time in 2007 as a senior translational medicine expert at the Novartis Institutes for BioMedical Research (NIBR), he had researched musculoskeletal disease management for 16 years, including 11 as Assistant Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School.

Video of Turning research advances into innovative medicines

“I had never really considered industry as an option,” recalls Rooks, who specializes in developing drugs to be used alongside exercise programs to help those affected by musculoskeletal diseases. “During the interview process, people kept using the phrase: ‘Looks like you’ve been training your whole life for this position.’ I’d say they were right; since I came on board, I’ve never looked back.”

Acting as lynchpin between NIBR’s basic research and early clinical development, Rooks designs first-in-human and first-in-patient trials that provide a rapid assessment of the potential impact of a medicine. His leadership is vital to advancing the most promising drug candidates.

Over the eight years since joining NIBR, Rooks has enjoyed the pace and collaboration that characterize the work of the organization’s 360-strong global Translational Medicine group.

“The sense of urgency is a real positive energy,” he says. “You thrive as a team member and you get to work with highly committed, bright, focused people all working together for the ultimate goal: to develop a medication to help patients.”

Rooks also appreciates the financial, technical and human resources available to him at NIBR to advance the science and address unmet medical need. “If you put forward a proposal that’s sound, you’re able to access resources to accomplish your goal.”

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