

Name:

Riin Tamm

Job title:

Lab specialist, Tartu University Hospital

Career:

I graduated the Tartu Miina Härma Gymnasium in 2000. Since both of my parents are involved in the field of medicine (mother's paediatrician and father's veterinarian). I think that is why I became interested in human biology. After gymnasium (secondary school), I entered to the veterinary medicine at the Estonian University of Life Sciences, but after two months of studies, I found that this was not the right choice. I started my studies at Tartu University in the field of genetic engineering in 2001. Since autumn 2004, I went to work as a lab assistant, later as a researcher, at a biotechnology company Quattromed (now SYNLAB).

In the following years I worked as a geneticist in the Estonian University of Life Sciences (Institute of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences), as a specialist at Tartu University Hospital (United Laboratories, Department of Genetics), as a research fellow at UT Estonian Genome Center, at Estonian Biocentre etc. During my studies, I worked actively, and I got my master's degree in 2007 and in 2017, I defended my doctoral thesis in molecular diagnostic.

Responsibilities:

- Confirmation of analyses results- referring these to the doctors, consulting doctors
- Tracking the analysis workflow- checking that everything works properly
- Awareness of new molecular technologies and instruments
- Documentation, writing results
- Participation in conferences and trainings
- Reading scientific papers

Essential skills in my job:

- Leadership skills
- Communication skills (communication between different fields)
- Cooperation skills
- The ability to handle machines/ technology use
- Analytical ability
- Pipetting skills (pipetting technique)
- Activity
- Creativity and innovation

What I need to know in my job:

- Speciality knowledge- basic knowledge e.g. molecular biology and genetics
- Workflow and knowledge about clinical laboratory Knowledge about different instruments used in molecular genetic analyses
- Deep knowledge about my specific area I am responsible for (molecular diagnostics of infectious diseases)
- Knowledge of leadership, how to motivate people, time management, work organization



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Lab specialist, Riin Tamm, Tartu University Hospital, United Laboratories of Tartu University Hospital

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During my studies (in the 4th year of study), I felt that I also had to acquire an important skill in pipetting, and therefore I started looking for a job as a lab assistant. I came up with an idea to call to different biotechnology companies in Tartu for job opportunities. Since autumn 2004, I went to work as a lab assistant, later as a researcher, at a biotechnology company Quattromed (now SYNLAB). In the following years I worked as a geneticist in the Estonian University of Life Sciences (Institute of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences), as a specialist at Tartu University Hospital (United Laboratories, Department of Genetics), as a research fellow at UT Estonian Genome Center, at Estonian Biocentre etc. During my studies, I worked actively, and I got my master's degree in 2007 and in 2017, I defended my doctoral thesis in molecular diagnostic. My main field of research was pharmacogenomics – how genes affect the efficacy of medicines, focusing on drugs for leukaemia patients.

Nowadays I work as a lab specialist at Tartu University Hospital, United Laboratories of Tartu University Hospital in the department of immunoanalysis, in NAT (nucleic acid tests) lab. My responsibilities are confirmation of analyses results, consultation of doctors, management of general laboratory work (including monitoring of correctness of processed analyses, doing work schedules, arrangement the everyday work of lab technicians), and coordinating traineeship programs for trainees, organization of excursions for guests etc. In our laboratory, we have six specialists and one lab doctor. In addition to my everyday work, I give lectures for popularizing science. For example, I performed in the event "Cool school day" at the youth conference. In addition, I am involved with training for teachers of science and with different conferences (as a participant or presenter). Since 2014, I have also been a judge of science popularizing television program "Rakett69" (Rocket69). The goal of this program is to find brilliant young researchers among Estonian youths.

As a child, I also studied at a music school, where my mother forced me to go. Now I am grateful because I use the skills got from there in my today's daily work. I feel that the creativity I developed in the music school is also necessary for the field of genetic technology. It is necessary to be active and creative in this specialty.