Picking the perfect postdoc

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How does a postdoc differ from grad school?

- More freedom
- Less structure
- Ability to move

You need to ask yourself if you really need this step.
What to look for in a postdoc

- **Advisor**
  - Tenured or Non-tenured
  - Hands-on or Hands-off

- **Project**
  - You-defined or boss defined

- **Labmates**

- **Institution**

- **Location**

- **Future Career Steps**
What to expect in an advisor?

- A leadership style that works for you
- Scientific support
- Provides you exposure
- Ability to find YOUR career path
- Someone who publishes (how often and where?)
- Defined and stated period of financial support
What does an advisor expect from you?

- Independent thinking
- You will be able to lead a project
- Faster time to publication
- Ability to supervise a student/tech
- Possibly your own $$$
Choose for your next career step

- What is your next step?
  - Academics (portability)
  - Industry (connections)
  - Non-traditional (time to develop skill sets)

- Choose (or not) a postdoc accordingly
Desired Skills

- Field
  - Similar to PhD (more papers)
  - New Field entirely (more skills)
  - Organism (middle-ground)
- Is there a particular technical skill you need to master?
- Non-technical:
  - Writing
  - Grants
  - Teaching
  - Mentoring
  - Other career skills
Labmates

- Size of lab
- Do people generally get along and like the lab
- Lives outside lab
- Length of postdocs
- Where do people go
What to look for in an institution

- **Postdoc Office**
  - Postdoc Association

- Standard pay scale
- Decent benefits

- Good facilitates
Location, location

- Where do you want to live
- Family concerns
- Money
Find an additional mentor

- Career
- Science

- This does not mean have another boss!
How do I find a postdoc lab?

- Papers
- Recommendations
- People you meet
- Networking!
Other ???

- Continue in the same lab/institution?
- Do a postdoc at an Institution I want a career at?
NIH Postdoctoral Programs

- Positions in basic, translational and clinical research
- For US citizens and foreign nationals
- Must be within 5 yrs of receiving doctoral degree
- A number of competitive fellowships are available:
  - Intramural Fellowship to Promote Diversity
  - Intramural AIDS Research Fellowship
  - National Research Council
  - PRAT Program
- Intramural Loan Repayment program - for research and clinical fellows only

http://www.training.nih.gov/postdoctoral/
Making your postdoc a sucess

- Define expectations
  - Have an IDP
- Set goal posts, and check in on them
More resources

- Connect with me on Linked-In and join the NIH Intramural Science Linked-In group
- Watch previous OITE career workshops, including many on CVs, resumes and cover letters
- Read the OITE Careers blog and join the Twitter group @NIH_OITE
- Join the OITE NIH Training Alumni database if you are/were a student or fellow here
- Email me at conlanlo@mail.nih.gov