

## **NIEHS fellow transitions to career in biopharmaceuticals**

*By Monica Frazier*

As a postdoc and then a research fellow at NIEHS, Rajesh Kasiviswanathan, Ph.D., was a busy and productive member of the Mitochondrial DNA Replication Group, headed by Chief of the Laboratory of Molecular Genetics (LMG) William Copeland, Ph.D. Now, after a successful job search, Kasiviswanathan will bring the same work ethic and intensity to his new position.

In March, Kasiviswanathan joined the Purification Development Division at [Fujifilm Diosynth Biotechnologies](http://www.fujifilm Diosynth.com/) (<http://www.fujifilm Diosynth.com/>) in Morrisville, N.C., a contract manufacturing organization that produces recombinant proteins, vaccines, and monoclonal antibodies using good manufacturing practices. His new career dovetails perfectly with his experience at NIEHS. While at the Institute, he specialized in protein purification and characterization, so much so that he published several papers, including seven as first author.

"Rajesh's vast experience in protein chemistry and enzymology will serve him well at Fujifilm," Copeland said. "I expect great success from him."

### **Knowing your strengths**

After earning his graduate degree at the University of Maryland, College Park, Kasiviswanathan wasn't entirely sure whether he wanted to do his postdoc in government, industry, or academia, but he knew coming to NIEHS would definitely give him confidence, independence, and critical skills, such as experimental design, protein purification, and interpreting and communicating scientific data.

In Copeland's group, Kasiviswanathan studied the biochemical defects of disease mutations in the human mitochondrial DNA polymerase gamma, but he was also involved in collaborative studies with colleagues at Yale, Duke, and Oregon Health and Science University, among others.

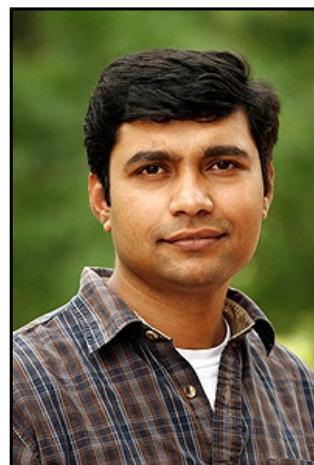
Kasiviswanathan noted, "I realized very early during my postdoc that I like purifying proteins, and I had lots of opportunities to learn and standardize the processes for protein purification in Bill's lab."

### **Using your network**

Kasiviswanathan took advantage of opportunities to gain leadership experience and build a network through NIEHS. He was involved in organizing two LMG retreats, and used his leadership position to develop contacts that were very helpful during his job search. "I highly recommend that postdocs serve on these committees, because it is a great way to develop new contacts and network," he said.

Kasiviswanathan suggested postdocs use tools offered through the NIEHS Office of Fellows' Career Development, and felt that identifying his career goals early during his postdoc was a huge advantage. The combination of his impressive scientific accomplishments and ability to network ultimately helped Kasiviswanathan find the exact position he wanted.

(Monica Frazier, Ph.D., is an Intramural Research Training Award fellow in the NIEHS Laboratory of Molecular Genetics.)



*Kasiviswanathan said, "I am very fortunate to find a position at Fujifilm Diosynth that perfectly matched my technical expertise and career interests." (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)*



*"Rajesh was an absolute gem in the lab and will be deeply missed," Copeland said. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)*

The Environmental Factor is produced monthly by the [National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences \(NIEHS\)](http://www.niehs.nih.gov/) (<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/>), Office of Communications and Public Liaison. The content is not copyrighted, and it can be reprinted without permission. If you use parts of Environmental Factor in your publication, we ask that you provide us with a copy for our records. We welcome your [comments and suggestions](#). ([bruskec@niehs.nih.gov](mailto:bruskec@niehs.nih.gov))

This page URL: <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/news/newsletter/2013/5/science-rajesh/index.htm>  
NIEHS website: <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/>  
Email the Web Manager at [webmanager@niehs.nih.gov](mailto:webmanager@niehs.nih.gov)