



Alice and Eva are both researchers in Dr Karin Straathof's lab at UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health (ICH).

"We're working on the development of new CAR-T cell therapies for neuroblastoma, the second most common solid childhood cancer. This immunotherapy consists on taking the white blood cells from patients, engineering them to express a new receptor and injecting them back into the patients. This redirects the patients' white blood cells to recognise and attack the cancerous cells more efficiently. These white blood cells will also have the potential to recognise and attack new cancer cells that may develop later on in life - even more strongly than the first time," says Alice.

"GOSH is at the forefront of research into childhood diseases. From researcher to clinician, there's a multitude of expertise at GOSH, and these teams work closely together. Everything we do is aimed to treat and cure seriously ill children. They need our help and our research can make a difference in their lives. A living example is Kymriah, a CAR-T cell therapy developed to treat leukaemia patients, which was recently used to treat a patient here at GOSH," says Eva.

"I hope one day, something I've worked on or helped developed as part of a team, will make it in to the clinic, in to patients, and help their lives. That's what motivates me every day and keeps me pushing forwards," says Alice.

And what has inspired a career in science?

"The Italian scientist Rita Levi Montalcini," begins Alice. "Her Jewish identity meant that she was greatly persecuted during World War II. She experimented on chicken eggs, in a laboratory she set up in her bedroom. Despite these difficulties, she was awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine. I always thought 'I want to be like her when I grow up.' I've always been fascinated, and I've always had her in my mind."

A message to girls who have an interest in science:

"Just go for it. Work hard, be determined. Not only in science but in life," says Eva.

"Things have already changed and are still changing. I had a lot of female teachers at a young age who were supportive. In sport, my family encouraged me to follow my passion for kick boxing and boxing and despite being the only girl in the team I never felt left out. The other boys didn't care that I was a girl and I had a lot of support from my coach. So if you are interested in science, study, work hard and join the scientific community."