

Expert Support for NGS Scientists



OGT is built on strong foundations of partnership, collaboration and expertise. With many of our team once being customers themselves, our scientists endeavour to create a portfolio shaped by a genuine understanding of its real-world clinical application.

Meet Jackie Chan (PhD) and Huiyan Jin (PhD), OGT's Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) experts. Jackie leads OGT's NGS development division, using her extensive experience to ensure OGT's products meet the exact needs of our customers - from product design, development through to assay implementation. Huiyan is very much on the NGS frontline, as one of OGT's Field Application Scientists (FAS) providing training, troubleshooting, and helping to streamline NGS workflows across multiple laboratories and institutes in North America..



Jackie Chan (PhD)
Head of Development



Huiyan Jin (PhD)
Field Application Scientist - NGS

Q Tell us about your expertise and what led you to work at OGT?

A Jackie:

I joined OGT in January 2014 as part of a grant funded project, PATHSEEK, that was a collaboration of four organisations including OGT, CLC Bio (now Qiagen), University College London, and Erasmus University (Netherlands).

I have over ten years' experience in NGS which started with my PhD studies using NGS to sequence bacteriophages. Following that, I moved into a post doc position where I was lucky enough to be part of a very unique project involving the metagenomic analysis of Tuberculosis in a Mummy. I then made my first move into clinical NGS where we were tracking infection outbreaks in repatriated soldiers from Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Huiyan:

I've been working with NGS since my graduate studies at Texas A&M university. I then worked for Roche as a Sequencing Target Enrichment Support Specialist for over three years. My previous position covered both academic and clinical NGS work. OGT focuses on NGS solutions for cancer, cytogenetics and rare diseases, and I was keen to contribute to the positive impact OGT has on the NGS community, so the role as FAS just made complete sense.

Q How do you use your expertise to help NGS users?

A Jackie:

When we troubleshoot, we try to think of every possible problem that could come up - it's a very proactive way of planning. We're also very reactive when customers have issues we may not have foreseen. Having the NGS experience I have means that, when it comes to product development, we really understand what the customer needs in terms of how the product looks and that helps us to ensure their NGS workflow is streamlined. Feedback is also very important to us as it helps us to update the next iteration of the product.

Huiyan:

Before a customer buys our products, I work with them to gain an understanding of their project needs to determine the best products and course of action to help them meet their goals. Post-purchase, we offer extensive NGS training, educating about the product and offering specialist NGS knowledge. We help to integrate that knowledge into lab techniques so that users know how to implement the best and the most efficient techniques, and how to watch out for red flags throughout the NGS workflow.

Q How does this help customers?**A Jackie:**

As Head of Development, I have been heavily involved in every step of the NGS R&D process, including understanding how to make a product that best serves our customers. We're a small company which means there are less steps between us and our customers – that allows us to relate to our NGS users and offer in-depth support such as training and troubleshooting.

Huiyan:

I agree with Jackie in that we're very lucky to work for a close-knit company. That means our end users have access to knowledge and support that may be more difficult to obtain from other larger organisations. As an FAS, we really work together with our customers and I think that's reflected in the feedback we get. Many customers acknowledge that OGT provides timely and reliable support.

Q How has the pandemic affected the way you offer support?**A Jackie:**

MS Teams has really helped and we will take calls at any time of the day or night, regardless of time difference, to ensure our customers get the support they need. Instant messaging has been great as it removes the barrier of email and text and is much more convenient. All of the labs we deal with have had to divert resources and change the way they work so OGT has actively reacted to that need. In many ways it's been a positive change because time differences are now not an issue because we can provide support remotely.

Huiyan:

While it's proved challenging, we have worked hard to ensure our customers have not been affected and still have access to the support they need. We are slowly starting face-to-face meetings but in the future this is likely to be a combination of virtual and on-site meetings as it has worked so well!

Q Trend for next 5 years – how will you keep supporting?**A Jackie:**

Certainly for the NGS landscape, *in vitro* diagnostics (IVD) is a big thing and it's growing. We're going to be moving into the design control aspects of NGS IVD products so it's really about us complying with the current regulations set out by approved bodies such as the FDA. As NGS moves more into the IVD space we'll be taking on the responsibility of developing IVD products and providing best and most efficient solutions for our customers to enable their research and applications.

Huiyan:

Absolutely agree with Jackie in that we're moving towards more IVD products going forward. As most of our customers work in a regulated environment, the assays they use are very much determined by local regulations. So, it's really about us keeping up with those. We always try to be proactive and attend lots of webinars that discuss regulation and policies around IVD so that we're able to support our customers and prevent them coming up against any red tape.



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makes us.**