

From Bench to Bedside and Beyond: Gil Morgan, Oncologist and OncoAlert Founder, on Transforming Oncology Connections

Doctor Morgan, You began your career with a fellowship at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). What encouraged you to make these transitions, and what did you learn about yourself and your career through this process?

My time at the NIH was formative; I was immersed in cutting-edge molecular biology and surrounded by brilliant minds. Yet even amid all of that excitement, I felt a sense of incompleteness. I realized that if I stayed more concentrated on the laboratory research side, I might lose what drew me to medicine in the first place—the human connection. That insight was powerful enough to change my trajectory.

After a few years I found myself starting my clinical oncology residency at Karolinska and later working in clinical oncology in Lund, both world-class institutions brimming with intellectual energy. This taught me not only to listen to my gut, but also that there is no direct path and it might not look exactly like what you thought it would look like, but regardless, it will guide you to the right place.

The biggest lesson from these transitions was that leaving the “safe” path can open doors you didn’t know existed. I discovered how resilient and adaptable I could be—learning a new language, integrating into a new medical system, and thriving in an unfamiliar culture. Those experiences gave me the confidence to later build something from scratch, like OncoAlert, because I had already proved to myself that stepping into the unknown can lead to tremendous growth.

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Gilbert Morgan, MD

Clinical Oncologist from Texas, Director and Founder of Oncoalert Network



OncoAlert started with zero followers and has grown into a global platform. What was your original motive when creating it, and did you ever doubt yourself?

The idea for OncoAlert came from countless conversations with colleagues across the US and Europe who were frustrated by how fragmented oncology information had become. There was so much innovation happening, but it was scattered across journals, conferences, and regions. At the same time, I had been experimenting with social media and saw its potential to bridge that gap.

In 2019, at the AACR Annual Meeting, we launched OncoAlert with a few targeted tweets. At that point it was truly grassroots—no followers, no budget, just a group of like-minded professionals sharing knowledge. The key was consistency: showing up every day, engaging with doctors, nurses, scientists, and patient advocates, and amplifying their voices as well as the science.

Of course there were moments of doubt. It's one thing to have a vision; it's another to sustain the energy when it's just you and a handful of people tweeting into the void. But the positive feedback—seeing colleagues in low- and middle-income countries access the same cutting-edge updates as those in big academic centers—convinced me we were onto something. That sense of purpose carried me through the uncertainty and ultimately led me to make OncoAlert my full-time focus.

You've mentioned in other interviews that working in oncology requires a 'special person.' What personal practices or perspectives have helped you sustain meaning, balance, and resilience through the toughest moments?

Oncology is a field of profound highs and lows. You witness breakthroughs that change lives, and, at the same time, you walk with patients and families through devastating diagnoses. That emotional intensity can be draining if you don't have a grounding force. For me, that anchor is my family. My wife and our two children give me perspective, joy, and a reason to step away from the screen or the hospital and just be present. It's become a running joke that OncoAlert is my third child—but spending time with my actual children is what replenishes me. I also try to maintain a sense of purpose about why I chose this profession. Even though I've shifted from direct clinical care to running a nonprofit, I remind myself that every tweet, every educational event, and every partnership is ultimately about patients. Keeping that focus turns challenges into motivation. And on a very practical level, I decompress by doing ordinary

things with my family—sharing meals, going to the movies, and being back in Texas a quarter of the year. Those small rituals create balance.

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What advice would you give to young colleagues just beginning their careers in oncology, especially those who want to make a real impact?

First and foremost, make sure you truly love what you're doing. Oncology is incredibly rewarding but also demanding—intellectually, emotionally, and psychologically. The lows can be tough, but the highs, the ability to help patients and their families in a meaningful way, make it all worthwhile.

Second, keep patients at the center of everything. The doctor-patient relationship in oncology is unique—deeper and more personal than in most other specialties. Cherish it, learn from it, and let it guide your decisions.

Finally, don't be afraid to innovate. Whether it's research, advocacy, or new ways of educating peers, there's room to make a difference. OncoAlert began as a simple idea among friends and became a global network. That wouldn't have happened if I hadn't taken a chance. So cultivate curiosity, stay open to new opportunities—even if they're outside your comfort zone—and build relationships. Those are the ingredients for making a real impact in this field.

Thank you very much, Dr. Morgan, for sharing your experiences, insights, and inspiring journey with us.