Dear Sir/Madame, dear fellow healthcare providers,

My name is Youssef Yakkioui. I am a resident in Neurologic Surgery at Maastricht University Medical Centre and a PhD-student at Maastricht University in the Netherlands. For a research initiative at Maastricht University, we would like to ask you for your time and cooperation.

Our research concerns the molecular oncology of chordomas. You might have encountered these tumors in your experience as a veterinary healthcare provider. Chordomas are malignant tumors and are primarily found alongside the spinal axis with a most frequently appearance in ferrets (most frequently as tail tip tumors). As in humans, in ferrets these tumors require radical surgical management as the only suitable option. In contrast to ferrets, chordomas in humans lead to debilitating disease, as one third of these tumors is located at the base of the skull and show a high rate of recurrence after multimodal therapy. Therefore, chordoma researchers, including ourselves, have been studying this tumor in human tissue samples and cell lines to find possible molecular targets for enhancing their management. However, until today no major advances have been made on the level of targeted therapy. With your help we would like to change that.

In our novel experimental design, we would like to investigate the tumor biology of chordomas in ferrets. The experimental proposal calls for four chordoma tumors from the ferret tail tip. For this we would like to ask your cooperation.

If you are a veterinary surgeons or know someone who is, please contact us in case you encounter a tail tip tumor on a ferret and are planning to surgically resect it. To be able to conduct the necessary experiments, the tail tip tumor, after surgical resection, requires to be immediately stored in liquid nitrogen, dry ice or a -80°C (-112°F) freezer.

If you have any questions, please contact us at Y.Yakkioui@maastrichtuniversity.nl or by phone.

Tel.:+ 31642099376.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Youssef Yakkioui