Method to Detect Bladder Cancer Earlier is Under Development

AACR

• Scientists are using a microRNA panel to determine presence of disease.
• Bladder cancer is the fourth leading cause of cancer in men.
• Most bladder cancer is detected in later stages.

DENVER — Scientists may have discovered a way to diagnose bladder cancer at its earliest and, therefore, most treatable stages by measuring the presence or absence of microRNA using already available laboratory tests.

“Measuring expressions of microRNA in bodily fluid represents a very promising tool with widespread implications for screening,” said Liana Adam, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor in urology at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.

Adam presented her findings at the Fourth AACR International Conference on Molecular Diagnostics in Cancer Therapeutic Development.

Bladder cancer is the fourth most common solid malignancy in men and the fifth most common overall, with an estimated 70,000 new cases and more than 14,000 deaths expected this year alone in the United States. Unfortunately, the majority of patients are asymptomatic.

Scientists are working with microRNAs, the non-coding part of DNA, because they are often tissue specific, stable and their presence or absence can be linked to known clinical parameters.

In this case, Adam and colleagues identified 79 separate microRNAs that had been previously shown to be dysregulated in the blood of individuals with bladder cancer. They took blood samples from 20 individuals with preoperative bladder cancer and 18 in a control group.

Using a collection of standard statistical models, they determined that measurement of these microRNAs was as accurate as the current gold standard of testing.

“This needs further validation, but we could reasonably use this method for widespread screening of bladder cancer,” said Adam.

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The mission of the American Association for Cancer Research is to prevent and cure cancer. Founded in 1907, the AACR is the world's oldest and largest professional organization dedicated to advancing cancer research. The membership includes 32,000 basic, translational and clinical researchers; health care professionals; and cancer survivors and advocates in the United States and more than 90 other countries. The AACR marshals the full spectrum of expertise from the cancer community to accelerate progress in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer through high-quality scientific and educational programs. It funds innovative, meritorious research grants, research fellowships and career development awards. The AACR Annual Meeting attracts more than 18,000 participants who share the latest discoveries and developments in the field. Special Conferences throughout the year present novel data across a wide variety of topics in cancer research, treatment and patient care. The AACR publishes six major peer-reviewed journals: *Cancer Research; Clinical Cancer Research; Molecular Cancer Therapeutics; Molecular Cancer Research; Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention*; and *Cancer Prevention Research*. The AACR also publishes *CR*, a magazine for cancer survivors and their families, patient advocates, physicians and scientists, providing a forum for sharing essential, evidence-based information and perspectives on progress in cancer research, survivorship and advocacy.

Media Contact:
Jeremy Moore
(267) 646-0557
jeremy.moore@aacr.org [4]
In Denver, Sept. 27-30:
(303) 352-2464

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