MicroRNA Panel Provides a More Precise Lung Cancer Diagnosis

• Assay allows classification into four distinct subtypes.
• Subtype analysis may enable more effective therapeutic assignment.
• Test works on preoperative fine needle aspirates and biopsies.

DENVER - A test based on a panel of microRNAs under development by Rosetta Genomics, Ltd., in Rehovot, Israel, may allow for more precise diagnosis and better targeted therapy for patients with lung cancer.

Tina B. Edmonston, M.D., director of the clinical laboratory at Rosetta Genomics, Inc., presented data on the assay at the Fourth AACR International Conference on Molecular Diagnostics in Cancer Therapeutic Development [1] , held here.

Lung cancers are traditionally divided into two main groups, either neuroendocrine or non-small cell lung cancer. In 20 to 30 percent of the cases it is difficult to make a definitive diagnosis of the tumor subtype using fine needle biopsy.

"Subclassification has become very important in the determination of patient management," said Edmonston. "This subclassification leads to treatment decisions, so it is very important to make the diagnosis accurately."

Using their proprietary assay, which is still under development, Edmonston and colleagues were able to further subclassify non-small cell lung cancer into squamous and non-squamous, and neuroendocrine into small cell lung cancer and carcinoid with a high level of sensitivity and specificity.

Edmonston said this assay would result in better treatment decisions because not all subtypes of lung cancer will respond to certain drugs and some may even pose unique risks

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Media Contact:
Jeremy Moore
(267) 646-0557
jeremy.moore@aacr.org [5]
In Denver, Sept. 27-30:
(303) 352-2464

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