

New Early-Stage Cancer Test on Trial

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A team of scientists at John Hopkins University have come one step closer to creating a universal blood test for cancer. While UK experts have called the CancerSEEK test “enormously exciting,” one said more trials are needed to assess the effectiveness of the test at detecting early-stage cancer, according to the BBC.

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Clinical procedures to detect eight common forms of the disease have been trialed on 1,005 patients with cancers in the ovary, liver, stomach, pancreas, esophagus, colon, lung or breast by the John Hopkins group. The disease had not yet metastasized to other parts of the body.

The CancerSEEK test scans for mutations in 16 genes often found in cancer, as

well as eight proteins commonly released, according to the BBC. A total of 70 percent of the cancers were detected.

“This field of early detection is critical,” said Dr. Cristian Tomasetti, from the John Hopkins University School of Medicine. He went on to say “I think this can have an enormous impact on cancer mortality.”

Dr. Tomasetti reminded that encountering tumors in their early stage, when they can still be surgically removed would be “a night and day difference” for survival and chances of recovery.

People who have not been diagnosed with cancer are currently undergoing CancerSEEK testing.

Researchers hope it can be used in conjunction with other vital screening tools, such as colonoscopies for colorectal cancer and mammograms for breast cancer, according to the BBC.

“We envision a blood test we could use once a year,” said Dr. Tomasetti.
