

# Urine test could help detect aggressive bladder cancer

November 29 2013

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A simple urine test could distinguish between aggressive and less aggressive bladder cancers according to a new *Cancer Research UK* study published in the *British Journal of Cancer*.

The [test](#) could quickly detect [patients](#) with the most advanced and aggressive forms of bladder cancer, helping to tailor and speed up their treatment.

The researchers from the University of Birmingham measured the levels of a [protein](#) shed by the bladder tumour in 600 patients. They found that higher levels of a protein, known as EpCAM, in the urine were linked to more aggressive cancers.

Dr Douglas Ward, a researcher at the University of Birmingham and one of the study authors, said: "This protein could be used to help doctors to decide what the best course of investigation or treatment for the patients is, and may prevent unnecessary delays.

"We've known for some time that the protein EpCAM is released from some tumour cells but it wasn't clear whether it would be useful as a way to decide the best investigation and treatment for patients suspected of having bladder cancer. We are now planning further studies to test the benefits of urine biomarker testing to patients and the NHS."

Around 10,300 cases of [bladder cancer](#) are diagnosed every year in the UK.

Martin Ledwick, Cancer Research UK's head information nurse, said: "This research has shed new light on a protein that we've known for some time is linked to certain types of cancer. Developing a urine test to work out how aggressive or advanced a patient's tumour is could replace the need for more invasive and costlier tests used by doctors at the moment.

"Finding ways to help make tests and treatments kinder for [cancer patients](#) is just one of the areas that Cancer Research UK continues to fund as part of our life-saving research."

**More information:** Bryan, RT et al. Urinary EpCAM in urothelial bladder cancer patients: characterisation and evaluation of biomarker potential (2013) *British Journal of Cancer*.

Provided by Cancer Research UK

Citation: Urine test could help detect aggressive bladder cancer (2013, November 29) retrieved 19 November 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-11-urine-aggressive-bladder-cancer.html>

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