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Urine test for prostate cancer could reveal who needs urgent treatment

Scientists have developed a urine test to identify men who are most likely to need treatment after being diagnosed with early prostate cancer.

Researchers at the University of East Anglia (UEA) and the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital have developed a urine test to diagnose aggressive [prostate cancer](#) and predict whether patients will require treatment up to five years earlier than the current test ([the PSA test](#)).

The new test could help large numbers of men avoid unnecessary worry, investigations and medical treatment. Prostate cancer often grows slowly to start with, and won't lead to future problems for some men. While more aggressive tumours in others require cancer treatment.

Lead author Dr [Shea Connell](#), from UEA's Norwich Medical School, said: "Prostate cancer is more commonly a disease men die with rather than from. Unfortunately, we currently lack the ability to tell which men diagnosed with prostate cancer will need radical treatment and which men will not."

He hopes the test will be available on the NHS within three years, and offered alongside PSA testing.

The research team developed the Prostate Urine Risk (PUR) test, using machine learning to look at gene expression in urine from samples collected from over 500 men. By examining 167 genes, the team found a combination of 35 different ones that could be used to produce a marker for those most at risk of an aggressive form of the disease.

Robert Mills, consultant surgeon in urology at Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, said: "Currently diagnostic tests for prostate cancer are too nonspecific to differentiate those without prostate cancer. This test has the potential to improve clinical decision making by helping to differentiate these three groups."

Dr Mark Buzza, global director of biomedical research programs at the [Movember Foundation](#) that funded the study, said: "The PUR test has enormous potential to transform the diagnosis and treatment of prostate cancer. Bringing researchers together to collaborate rather than compete for funding allows research findings to be fast-tracked for the benefit of men."

The research was published in [BJU International](#).

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Last updated by: Ashwin Bhandari 26/06/2019	
Peer reviewed by: Natalie Healey 26/06/2019	

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