

New method to detect cancer when solid biopsy fails

By A Staff Reporter

India's premier genomics based research and diagnostics company, MedGenome, yesterday announced the launch of "ONCOTRACK". The liquid biopsy based Oncotrack is a non-invasive screening test that can identify genetic alterations, interpret, assess and treat various forms of cancer. It comes as a last resort when solid samples cannot be obtained from the patient. Although, the test is quite a bit expensive now, the company is working on reducing its costs to make it affordable for more people across the country. Dr. Ramkant Deshpande, senior oncologist, said, "In most cases it becomes difficult to get solid samples especially in case of lung cancer. If the cancer has reached an advanced stage then invasion or injection can lead to lung collapse, which is not recommended. This liquid biopsy will not only help detect cancer but also track the way the treatment is helping the patient."

"Management of cancer will undergo a massive transformation in India with NGS based liquid biopsies. We are constantly striving to get the most advanced genetic testing technology/technique at affordable prices to the patients and ONCOTRACK is one such offering," said Sam Santhosh, Chairman, MedGenome.

The test developed entirely by MedGenome, is the only one to be validated in India and verified from samples of cancer patients from across the country. It helps detect melanoma, lung and colon cancers. The test facilitates detection of mutation where



there is difficulty of obtaining biopsy or in the event of a damaged biopsy material and non-availability of tissue biopsy. This offers Oncologists the power to look for actionable alterations in a patient's treatment, management, without having to do an invasive biopsy or where biopsy is not an option.

"Liquid biopsy has the capacity to interpret infinite mutations which will pave the way for new drug discovery, research and therapies. Over thirty five oncologists in India have already screened patients using our Oncotrack. Further, since it has a very patient friendly approach, we are confident it will be very well accepted by the doctors and patients," said Dr V.L. Ramprasad, COO, MedGenome.

Oncotrack is a proven molecular tool after histopathology diagnosis and detecting molecular changes at base-

line and at the time of relapse in lung and colon cancer for deciding the right treatment. The test has been validated in a scientific study, in academic collaboration with Tata Memorial Hospital- Dr Kumar Prabhaskar, Medical Oncologist and Dr. Amit Dutt, Principal Investigator (Scientist F) at ACTREC, Tata Memorial Centre.

Dr. Kumar Prabhaskar opines that, "As the care gets more personalised, doctors will be equipped to make correct diagnosis, prognosis and prediction of diseases. Cell free tumour DNA (ctDNA) analysis will help in avoiding repeat biopsies of difficult to get tumours and also in monitoring the overall response to treatment on real time basis."

As of now the test costs around Rs 24,000 but MedGenome is working on reducing the costs to less than 4-5 thousand for common mutations.