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Bengaluru lab claims to crack difficulties related to tracking Cancer cells

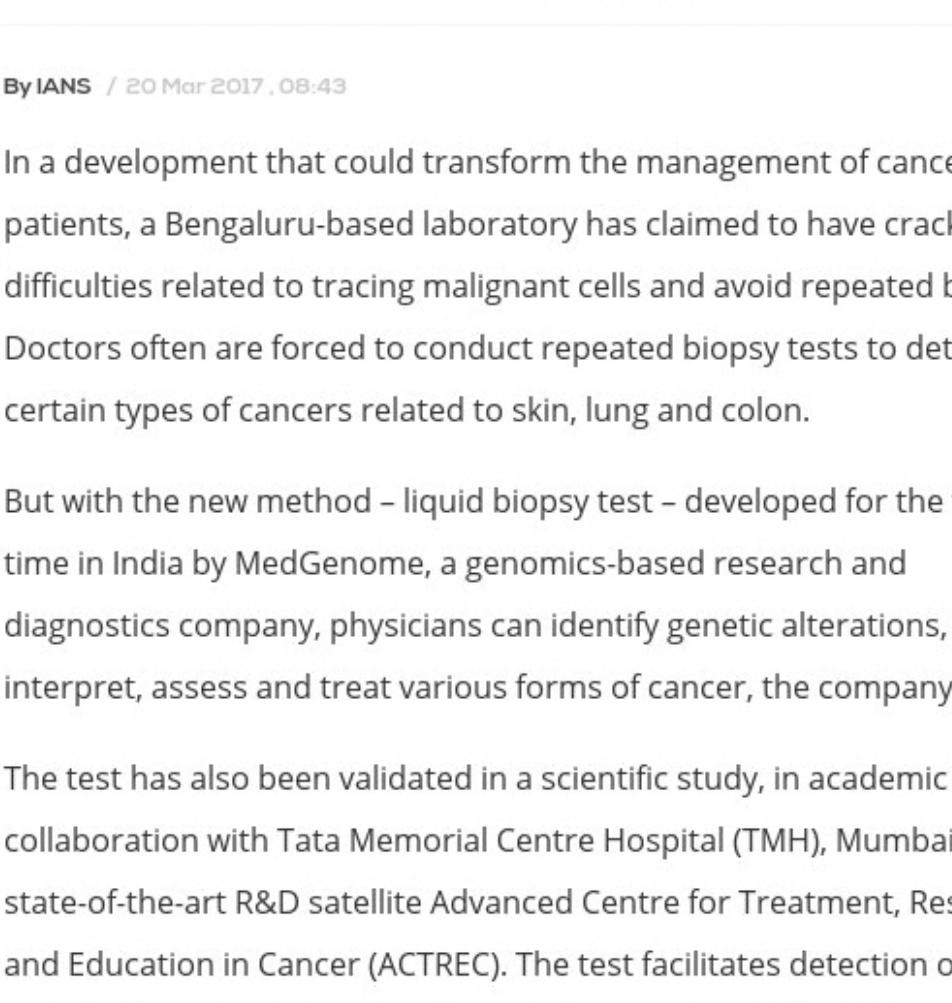


Image: Reuters

By IANS / 20 Mar 2017, 08:43

In a development that could transform the management of cancer patients, a Bengaluru-based laboratory has claimed to have cracked the difficulties related to tracing malignant cells and avoid repeated biopsies. Doctors often are forced to conduct repeated biopsy tests to detect certain types of cancers related to skin, lung and colon.

But with the new method – liquid biopsy test – developed for the first time in India by MedGenome, a genomics-based research and diagnostics company, physicians can identify genetic alterations, interpret, assess and treat various forms of cancer, the company said.

The test has also been validated in a scientific study, in academic collaboration with Tata Memorial Centre Hospital (TMH), Mumbai, and its state-of-the-art R&D satellite Advanced Centre for Treatment, Research and Education in Cancer (ACTREC). 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.

The development assumes significance in view of the fact that by 2020 India may have an estimated 1.73 million new cases of cancer and over 880,000 cancer deaths. Around 70 per cent of all cancer patients approach the doctor only when the symptoms noticeably appear and the chances of cure are very low as the by then disease has advanced.

"Management of cancer will undergo a massive transformation in India with NGS (next generation sequencing)-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, MedGenome Chairman.

Dr. Kumar Prabhash, Medical Oncologist at TMH, opines: "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."

In medical terms, the liquid biopsy-based test is a non-invasive screening that analyses cell-free DNA that is isolated from the patients' blood. Using high-end sequencing technology, the screening process identifies specific gene mutations that are linked with melanoma, lung and colon cancers.

This empowers cancer specialists, the oncologists, to look for actionable alterations in a patient's treatment and management, without having to do an invasive biopsy or where biopsy is not an option, Medgenome said.

"Liquid biopsy has the capacity to interpret infinite mutations which will pave the way for new drug discovery, research and therapies. Over 35 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 baseline and at the time of relapse in lung and colon cancer for deciding the right treatment.

MedGenome is a market leader for genomic diagnostics in South Asia and a leading provider of genomics research services globally.

MedGenome offers genomics solutions in cancer immunotherapy, diabetes etc., and works with various commercial and academic

researchers globally on genomic research projects. It is also a founding member of GenomeAsia 100K initiative to sequence 100,000 genomes in

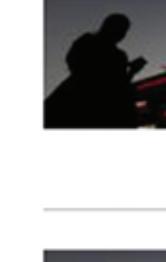
South, North and East Asia, Ramprasad said.

Tags: Advanced Centre for Treatment Research and Education in Cancer, Bengaluru, biopsy,

Cancer, ctDNA, Difficulty, DNA, Doctor, liquid biopsy test, MedGenome, Tata Memorial

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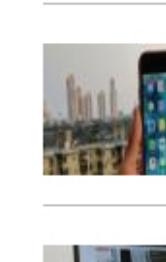
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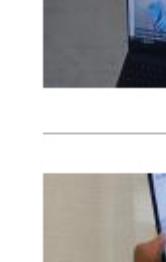
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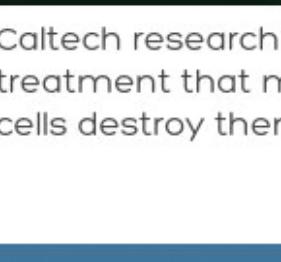
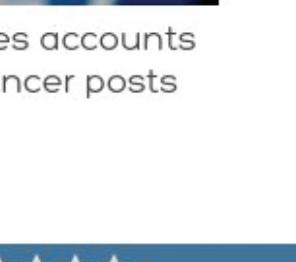
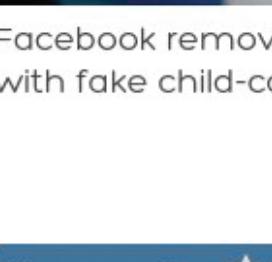
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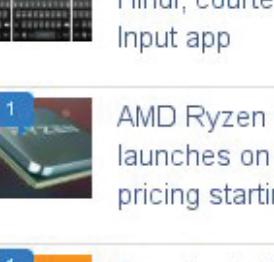
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