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New blood biomarker may help predict prostate cancer spread

Submitted by **Mohit Joshi** on Thu, 02/28/2008 - 05:28 **Prostate Cancer United States**



Prostate Cancer

- > 1 man in 6 will be diagnosed with PCA during his lifetime
- > 2nd cause of male-cancer death
- > 5yr-33% for spread cancers

Washington, Feb 28: Researchers at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center have reported finding a new blood biomarker that enables close to 98 percent accuracy in predicting the spread of prostate cancer to

regional lymph nodes.

The finding can lead to more accurate prediction of cancer metastasis thereby improving patient management.

When cancer spreads beyond a solid tumor, it often does so at a microscopic level that typically cannot be identified by conventional imaging methods such as CT scans.

The new blood test measures **levels** of endoglin, a plasma biomarker that has been previously shown to predict the spread of colon and breast cancer.

In the study, the researchers said that endoglin could help predict whether a patient's prostate cancer would spread beyond the solid tumor site into their lymph nodes.

"For prostate cancer, we have hit the limit of our ability to classify risk in these patients before initial surgery. We currently use prostate specific antigen, Gleason grade and a rectal exam, but the predictive value of those three tests is inadequate for predicting what cancers will spread. Conventional imaging modalities used for clinical staging in prostate cancer are inadequate to detect small but clinically significant lymph node metastases," said Shahrokh F. Shariat, MD, chief urology resident at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center and study author.

"Although it is recognized that pelvic lymphadenectomy can provide important staging and prognostic information, it is still not clear in whom this procedure should be done. Doing pelvic lymphadenectomy on all patients is not universally practiced, as this procedure could be time consuming and is not without morbidity. As such, it would be of tremendous benefit to have an accurate blood marker that identifies patients in whom pelvic lymphadenectomy should be done," said Claus G. Roehrborn, MD, professor, chairman of Urology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center and co-author of the study.

In the study, the research team reviewed 425 patients who had undergone surgery to remove both their prostates and associated pelvic lymph nodes.

Researchers measured the levels of plasma endoglin using a commercially available blood test. Higher plasma endoglin levels were associated with an increased risk of cancer spread to the lymph nodes. Each 1 ng/mL increase of plasma endoglin increased the risk for cancer spread into the lymph nodes by 17 percent.

When researchers added endoglin levels to their usual methods of prediction, the accuracy improved from 89.4 percent without endoglin to 97.8 percent. Blood levels of endoglin may

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allow doctors to predict the risk of cancer spread at an earlier stage and with higher accuracy than currently available methods.

The study is published in Clinical Cancer Research, a journal of the American Association for Cancer Research. (ANI)

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