

# New machine to help African AIDS victims

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A U.S. scientist is leading an effort to manufacture low-cost devices that would make affordable, widespread AIDS testing available in Africa.

The newly developed \$5,000 cell analyzers could measure the blood's content of CD4 cells that indicate how well a patient's immune system is functioning and how far AIDS has advanced, said Purdue Professor J. Paul Robinson.

"Unless patients in Africa are found to have CD4 counts of less than 200, they cannot receive antiviral treatment but the machines now in use are too expensive for most Africans to afford," Robinson explained, noting flow cytometers now used to perform blood analysis for CD4 cost up to \$100,000 each and are too complex to maintain in Africa and other resource-poor nations.

"The current cost for CD4 tests per patient in Africa is about \$12, which is ridiculous since the monthly income of someone in Africa often is less than \$10," Robinson said. "We believe that we can build a device that will reduce the cost for CD4 tests to 50 or 25 cents."

A \$250,000 gift from Cleveland's Parker Hannifin Corp. is helping launch the project.

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