

New test distinguishes between two cancers

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U.S. scientists have created a two-gene test to distinguish between nearly identical gastrointestinal cancers requiring radically different treatments.

"This simple and accurate test has the potential to be relatively quickly implemented in the clinic to benefit patients by guiding appropriate treatment," said senior author Wei Zhang, a professor of pathology at the University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center.

Researchers say the analytical technique they created to identify gastrointestinal stromal tumor from leiomyosarcoma with near-perfect accuracy will have wider application in more individualized diagnosis and treatment of other types of cancer.

Zhang and his colleagues at the Institute for Systems Biology in Seattle note an existing test distinguishes among the two cancers with about 87 percent accuracy but intensive and time-consuming additional analyses are required for uncertain cases.

The study is reported in the online early edition of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

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