# Medical Xpress

# Genes identified may help breast cancer diagnosis

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Researchers at Keele University, Germany, have identified two genes which may help improve the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer patients.

The research team, which also included colleagues from Nottingham and Cambridge universities and King's College London, are identifying and studying genes which control whether a cell lives or dies.

They found that the survival rate for patients with a low expression of a gene known as Fau, a tumour suppressor, is twice as bad as for people with normal levels, while a high expression of cancer-causing gene MELK has a similar effect.

Professor Gwyn Williams, who has been working on the study for 20 years, said he was excited by the discovery, published in the journal Breast Cancer Research, as it had clear real world relevance.

"Our ongoing research is about finding the genes which may go wrong in people with cancer," he said. "Genetic changes give hints to where to target therapy and can also help diagnose cancer."

"When you know enough about genes like these you could carry out a general screening of people who might be at risk. This is not an overnight solution but in the next 20 years I would like to see our knowledge of Fau and MELK being used in more practical areas."

Research teams will now study the two genes in greater depth to identify their uses in diagnosis. The findings may also prove significant in ovarian and [prostate cancer](#) research.

Source: Keele University