

Combination of PET/CT tests can expedite diagnosis of lung cancer in a fast-track setting

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Research published in the October 2009 issue of the *Journal of Thoracic Oncology* has found an effective combination of positron emission tomography (PET)/computed tomography (CT) (PET/CT) tests to diagnose lung cancer in a "fast-tracked" outpatient setting. This novel approach to the diagnosis of lung cancer demonstrated a high level of sensitivity (97%) and accuracy (82%). The fast track model tests patients for lung cancer over the course of one day and could expedite identification and treatment of the disease.

Using the 18F-fluorodeoxyglucose (FDG) imaging technique, with a PET/CT scanner, researchers from The Netherlands Cancer Institute in Amsterdam evaluated 114 patients experiencing pulmonary symptoms and/or abnormal chest x-rays.

Researchers were able to make a final diagnosis for 92 percent of the patients using the fast-tracked model, and determine a malignancy in 84 percent of the patients. These results represent a diagnostic gain of 8 and 7 percent respectively compared to previous techniques.

"Our approach resulted in a fast and accurate diagnosis and allowed for treatment to be initiated without delays." said Dr. Tjeerd S. Aukema of The Netherlands Cancer Institute. "These results suggest that availability of fast track assessment facilities can contribute to appropriate and timely evaluation of lung malignancies."

Source: International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer

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