

# Scientists find way to predict stomach cancer relapses

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Researchers at the National Cancer Center in Japan have developed a system for detecting 70 percent of postoperative stomach cancer relapses, according to sources.

Many cases of [cancer](#) spread to the abdominal membrane before an operation, only to be detected after surgery. The system is expected to help prevent such relapses.

About 30 percent to 40 percent of the about 100,000 [stomach cancer](#) patients in the country could be suffering from a cancer that metastasized prior to an operation.

More than 50 percent of the relapse cases are caused by [metastasis](#) to abdominal membranes adjacent to the stomach. Before removing stomach cancers, doctors use a microscope to check whether a patient's cancer has metastasized. But more often than not, small metastases are overlooked, and the patient suffers a relapse several years later.

The research team developed an apparatus that can discern a substance that only sticks to [RNA](#) peculiar to stomach cancer inside abdominal membrane cells.

The team used this equipment to examine 191 people with advanced stomach cancer who had already had an operation to remove the cancer.

The test detected [cancer cells](#) in 34 of the patients who were found to

have cancer cells following a microscope examination. However, the test also detected cancer cells in 36 others that the microscope test had failed to pick up.

Of these 70 patients, 52 redeveloped cancer within four years of an operation. Of all the 191 patients examined, 75 suffered relapses, which means the system successfully predicted 70 percent of the cases.

"It's still impossible to locate cancer in abdominal membranes, so it's difficult to remove (cancer from them)," said Hiromi Sasaki of the center, who led the team. "But (the number of) relapses can be reduced if we carry out both a stomach cancer operation and anticancer drug treatment on abdominal membranes."

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