

Refocusing the boom in biomarker research

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An article in the current edition of *Chemical & Engineering News*, ACS's weekly newsmagazine, describes the trials, tribulations, and triumphs of one of the hottest pursuits in modern biomedical science — the search for "biomarkers" that could greatly improve the diagnosis of disease and efforts to monitor the effectiveness of treatment.

In the article, C&EN Senior Editor Celia Henry Arnaud explains that biomarkers are substances in human blood, urine, saliva and other body fluid that raise red flags for disease. Biomarkers may be present in abnormally high or low levels or in patterns that differ in health and disease. Some biomarker-based tests have made their way into every day medicine. One, for instance, is the familiar PSA test, long used to screen men for prostate cancer. Another, CA125, is used for ovarian and other forms of cancer.

Arnaud focuses on a boom in the search for new biomarkers that has been plagued with problems. Cancer biomarkers that appeared promising in research studies, for instance, turned out to be no better than CA125. The article suggests new approaches to improve [biomarker](#) discovery, including closer initial collaboration between research scientists and medical personnel who would use biomarkers in improving health care of patients.

More information: pubs.acs.org/cen/science/89/8930sci1.html

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