

Researchers find blood test will identify clot risk in prostate cancer patients

January 29 2014, by Rosie Hales

(Medical Xpress)—A team of Queen's researchers has found that a certain blood test may be able to detect the risk of thromboembolism – or blood clots – in prostate cancer patients, allowing doctors to make more informed decisions when deciding whether to prescribe blood thinning medication.

Generally, [prostate cancer](#) patients have an increased tendency for [blood clots](#). Anti-coagulant medication is often prescribed to thin the blood, but these medications can put patients at risk of bleeding.

The testing technique – thromboelastography (TEG) – measures the clotting ability, or coagulability, of a patient's blood with a much greater sensitivity compared to conventional tests, determining his or her risk factor for contracting a [thromboembolism](#).

"This research is crucially important because current guidelines do not recommend routine anticoagulation in [cancer patients](#).

Thromboelastography is a great tool to help us stratify risk of thrombosis in patients with prostate cancer and identify the appropriate candidates who would benefit from anticoagulation. I hope to see this test applied more in the clinic." says Maha Othman, Haemostasis specialist, study designer and co-ordinator, and professor in the department of biomedical and molecular sciences.

Groups of patients with prostate cancer were recruited and subdivided into groups based on their cancer stage and treatment. Blood samples

were taken from all participants and tested using TEG.

Patients from the second group (those with advanced cancer and taking part in [androgen deprivation therapy](#) (ADT) were found to be especially susceptible to hypercoagulability, or blood with a tendency to clot.

The team followed up with the study's participants over 12 months and found that seven out of 22 patients that were hypercoagulable based on their TEG results had developed one or more incidents of thromboembolism.

"Dr. Othman and I have collaborated in the lab on [basic science research](#) for the last few years on the interaction of cancer progression and coagulation and this paper is the first translational or "bench-to-bedside" study in this very important area of cancer biology and treatment," says Robert Siemens, the study's urologist collaborator. "This is the first clinical study looking at a sensitive marker of risk for thrombotic events in men with advanced prostate cancer, and further clinical and basic science studies are ongoing."

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Provided by Queen's University

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