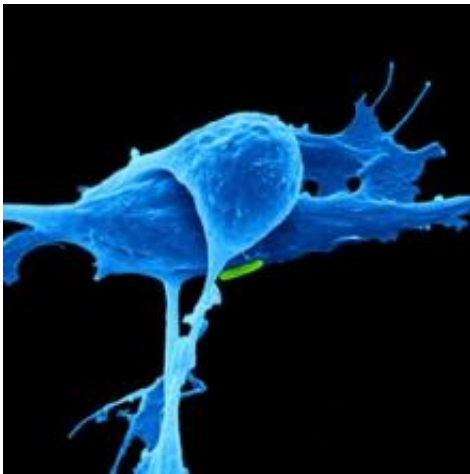


Screening could find more lung cancer, but price high

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More rigorous screening with low dose CT scans could catch tens of thousands of US lung cancer cases in the next five years, but at a price tag of \$9.3 billion, researchers said Wednesday.

The forecast made by experts at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, Washington, was based on US government recommendations for more CT scans rather than X-rays, particularly for people who have smoked for many years.

The US Preventive Services Task Force has called for annual low dose computed tomography scans in high-risk people on Medicare, the US

government health insurance program mainly for seniors.

Annual [screening](#) is now recommended for people age 55-80 who smoked at least 30 packs a year, and who currently smoke or have quit within the past 15 years.

Gradually implementing the recommendations for more rigorous low dose CT scans over five years would result in nearly 55,000 more [lung cancer](#) cases detected, said the findings.

Most of these cases would be early stage lung cancer, which could lead to improved prognosis and survival, the researchers said.

The total five cost for the imaging, diagnostics and cancer care would amount to \$9.3 billion.

If that were divided among every member of Medicare, it would be \$3.00 per month extra in premiums, the study said.

"If we can diagnose lung cancers at an earlier stage, patients can be treated far more effectively and survival prognosis is much better," said lead study author Joshua Roth.

"However, the key to the success of this [screening program](#) is ensuring that those who are at high risk actually undergo screening and subsequently receive appropriate treatment."

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