

A simple blood test provides personalised therapy for cancer patients

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Dr Arutha Kulasinghe. Credit: Queensland University of Technology (QUT)

Researchers have developed a simple blood test that can select cancer patients where therapies that use the body's own immune system (immunotherapies) are more likely to be effective.

Immunotherapies have been hailed as a 'game changer' in the treatment of [cancer patients](#) and have doubled [survival rates](#) in a number of cancers. However, they do not work in all patients and can be toxic to some.

With immunotherapy costing about \$150,000 per patient per year, it is important to identify patients who are most likely to benefit from the therapy.

"Immunotherapy uses your body's own immune system to kill cancer cells," says Dr. Arutha Kulasinghe from Queensland University of Technology (QUT).

"Cancer cells disguise themselves from our immune system—immunotherapy 'decloaks' or 'unmasks' cancer cells so that our bodies can find them.

"In this research, we are playing a game of 'Finding Wally'," says Dr. Kulasinghe.

"This blood test finds [cancer cells](#) in the blood then we can grow them in the lab to test to see which treatments will work."

The spread of cancer is responsible for 90 per cent of [cancer](#) related deaths and QUT researchers are paving the way for finding the correct treatment for each patient, therefore personalising medicine.

Provided by Freshscience

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