

## **AIIMS researchers design sensitive test for pulmonary, pleural TB**

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A team of researchers from the Department of Biotechnology at the All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi has developed a highly sensitive diagnostic test for pulmonary and pleural tuberculosis (TB). The diagnostic test makes use of a DNA aptamer (a small single-stranded DNA molecule that binds to a specific target molecule) that shows high binding affinity to a TB antigen.

The laboratory-based aptamer test for diagnosing pulmonary TB takes about five hours to turn in the results while the portable, rapid test takes just 30 minutes. Also, the portable test is cheaper and can be used for screening pulmonary TB and active case finding in high-risk groups.

The research team has applied for a patent for the aptamer reagent and has licensed it to AptaBharat Innovation Pvt. Ltd, a start-up at the Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI), Faridabad. The team soon plans to validate the tests on well characterised panel of specimens and field evaluation.