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Illumina, Merck to develop tests for identifying cancer mutations

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With the united goal of advancing cancer diagnostics and precision medicine

Illumina and Merck have announced a partnership to develop and commercialise tests that identify genetic mutations used in the assessment of homologous recombination deficiency (HRD).

Patients whose tumours are HRD-positive may be eligible for targeted treatment by a class of precision medicines called PARP inhibitors.

The HRD tests will leverage Illumina's TruSight Oncology 500 (TSO 500) content, enabling the most comprehensive genomic profiling assays in a single workflow.

The strategic partnership builds on an initial study conducted with Merck and leverages Illumina's relationship with Myriad Genetics to expand international access to the proprietary technology in Myriad's FDA approved myChoice CDx companion diagnostic test.

Illumina will develop a new HRD CDx test for the EU and the UK to aid in the identification of ovarian cancer patients with positive HRD status who are eligible for treatment with LYNPARZA (olaparib), a first-in-class PARP inhibitor, jointly developed and commercialized by Merck and AstraZeneca.

In addition, Illumina will develop and commercialise a research use only (RUO) HRD assay that will be add-on content for the TSO 500 RUO panel. Illumina plans to launch this product globally, excluding the US and Japan.