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Web tool designed for cancer patients

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A new web tool developed by scientists at University of Nottingham, UK uses a patient database from 1,500 general practices across England to predict the cancer patient's chances of survival.

The biggest question that comes to a cancer patient's mind after overcoming the initial shock of diagnosis is: "how much time do I have to live". Until now, doctors have used crude methods to answer this question based on the information available on the age, grade and stage of the cancer in general population.

But as per the developers of this new tool, it can offer much more reliable estimate of both absolute survival rates for men and women with colorectal cancer.

Current methods of estimating survival tend to be unreliable and sometimes patients can be given a fairly misleading and unnecessarily gloomy prognosis based only on the grade and stage of their cancer, only to find that in reality they live much longer than these crude predictions when other information is taken into account.

According to scientists, it is the ability of this tool to take into consideration a wide range of risk factors like family history, lifestyle, body mass index and a plethora of other such relevant information before coming up with an estimate of survival.

The health data of over 44,000 patients from 947 practices was studied to develop separate equations for men and women aged between 15 and 99 years old when diagnosed with bowel cancer.