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TMC researchers develop a biomarker for cancer

25 August 2017 | News

The biomarker, MMP10 protein, can be identified using a simple immuno histochemical analysis, a method to locate proteins in tissue sections.



Researchers at the Tata Memorial Centre in Mumbai have identified a biomarker that will help doctors decide whether patients with early-stage tongue cancer should undergo neck surgery to remove 20-30 lymph nodes. Patients negative for the biomarker can be spared of neck dissection.

In the absence of a reliable biomarker capable of pointing out in which patients the disease will recur, doctors routinely remove the affected part of the tongue and the lymph nodes in all patients with early-stage tongue cancer.

The biomarker, MMP10 protein, can be identified using a simple immuno histochemical analysis, a method to locate proteins in tissue sections. Only those patients who have higher level of this protein are likely to have cancer spread to the lymph nodes. So the biomarker will help doctors to decide which patients could be spared of complex surgeries to remove the lymph nodes.

The research team would be further validating these findings using a higher sample size for the next trial.