



Aqsens Health, Tyks and Auria Biobank join forces for a research study to detect and classify bladder cancer with phage-biosensors

Turku, Finland. Aqsens Health, Turku University Hospital (Tyks) and Auria Biobank join forces for a bladder cancer research study. This local research collaboration aims to see whether Aqsens Health's biosensors can be used in the detection and classification of bladder cancer, focusing especially on non-invasive monitoring of bladder cancer tumor development, relapse, and recurrence. The collaboration strengthens ties between the University of Turku and local health and biotech groups and start-ups.

Leading the clinical side of the collaboration together with Aqsens' team is Associate Professor and head of Tyks' Urology department Peter Boström, who has had an extensive career in treating and researching different urological cancers and conditions, including bladder and prostate cancer. Also taking part in the research collaboration with Aqsens is the Turku-based Auria Biobank which has a comprehensive collection of biological samples and related clinical data for research purposes. The biobank operates in Tyks in connection with the University of Turku.

Bladder cancer is divided into two distinct categories: usually less-aggressive non-muscle invasive bladder cancer and muscle invasive bladder cancer. 70% of bladder cancer cases are non-muscle invasive and 30% muscle invasive. The focus of this study will be on detecting primary low-grade non-muscle invasive bladder cancer and monitoring tumor development, as well as detecting and differentiating the acute aggressive muscle invasive form of bladder cancer from the more benign one.

Monitoring the usually less aggressive bladder cancer variants is often a resource intensive and expensive process. The yearly cystoscopies required for monitoring can also be uncomfortable and bothersome for patients. Reducing the number of cystoscopies needed for follow-up and tumor development monitoring could bring the most benefits to clinical practice.

“One of the main benefits that we could reach through this study is a test that could help in surveillance of low-grade bladder cancer after therapy,” says Turku University Hospital’s Head of Urology and Associate Professor Peter Boström.

“Decreasing the number of cystoscopies needed would save a lot of time and valuable resources, and would also be a more comfortable and convenient experience for patients,” Prof. Boström continues.

The opportunity to collaborate on a meaningful project locally in Turku brings with it a lot of positive synergy.

“We’re extremely happy to have local collaborators working with us on this important project. The detection of bladder cancer, its classification and potentially treatment response monitoring are all in a key role in our urinary tract strategy. And from the practicalities point of view having all parties in Turku enables efficient and high-quality project execution,” says Aqsens Health’s CEO Timo Teimonen.

“This type of public-private collaboration is important when it comes to looking for new means of early detection and treatment follow-up of cancer. It is great that the biological samples stored at the biobank can be utilized in this study and it certainly will create a positive impact for all parties involved,” concludes project manager Merja Perälä from Auria Biobank.

The study is set to officially begin in August with the first batch of sample analyses.

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