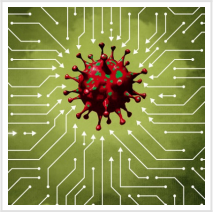
First Rapid Breath Test for Coronavirus Trialled



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Canterbury-based technology firm ANCON Medical ('Ancon') announces the trial of its Nanotechnology Biomarker Tagging (NBT) system, to provide a breath test to diagnose Coronavirus in 10 -15 minutes. The system, if successful, will provide a rapid, accurate, safe and non-invasive test for Coronavirus.

The trial is taking place at Ashford & St Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. It is using samples from both Positive and Negative confirmed Covid-19 cases and, if successful, the artificial intelligence and machine learning could determine the unique biomarker profile of a Covid-19 positive breath.

The new testing method would provide the result in 10-15 minutes, so people would not have to self-isolate for reasons such as returning from countries on the UK's quarantine list, unless they test positive for the Covid-19 infection. It is hoped this will help hospitals and key workers in combating future outbreaks by allowing healthy staff to remain on the frontline with effective testing.

The system being tested involves collecting and analysing exhaled breath in swab containers. Breath contains a mixture of substances which changes depending on diet and health. Ancon's system measures the levels and patterns of the different substances in the air sample; it is extremely sensitive and can detect very low concentrations. The samples are analysed immediately without the need to be sent to a lab. Sample collection is safe and non-invasive.

Dr Stephen Winchester, Consultant in Medical Virology said: "As the coronavirus pandemic develops, it's clear that our response should be long-term and pre-emptive and advances in research, diagnosis, treatment and technology will be absolutely key to managing future outbreaks and protecting communities.

"Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in Surrey has a strong history of

research and development and is proud to be part of this new trial, seeking a device to diagnose coronavirus in 10 to 15 minutes. This may significantly boost the rapid diagnosis and management of patients presenting with acute symptoms. It has the potential to provide an improved experience for patients and aid clinical decision making," said Winchester. "It's a great example of the fields of technology and medical science working closely together and the Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals' team are very excited to be part of this potentially ground-breaking project."

Dr Linda Pomeroy, CEO of ANCON said: "We are thrilled to be partnering with the Trust to trial the NBT system. As the Coronavirus pandemic continues to gain momentum globally it is abundantly clear that new innovation in diagnosis, treatment and prevention will be key. Our system has the potential to drastically reduce the time it takes for diagnosis and makes it easier to perform tests at the point of use.

"This could be a game-changer in testing and crucially, screening. This is a scalable test which – at full capacity – could allow us to mass test people returning from abroad on flights or on entering schools to ensure the continued safety of the general population in public places," said Pomeroy.

Read the original article on Laboratory News.