Bladder cancer test boosts accuracy of cystoscopy

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UP CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Houston—Nuclear matrix protein 22 (NMP22) is to bladder cancer as PSA is to prostate cancer, perhaps better. That is the implication of a recently published, prospective, multi-institution study showing the point-of-care NMP22 assay (BladderChek, Matritech, Newton, MA) has a sensitivity of 55.7% and a specificity of 85.7%. In contrast, cytology was found to have lower sensitivity (15.8%) but higher specificity (99.2%).

When used in conjunction with cystoscopy, the office-based test detected 94% of bladder cancers, compared with 89% detected by cystoscopy alone, the authors reported. It also identified four invasive, life-threatening cancers missed during cystoscopy. The study appears in the Feb. 16 issue of JAMA (2005; 293:810-6).

Lead author H. Barton Grossman, MD, professor and deputy chairman of the department of urology at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, said the study points out the value of the NMP22 test as a screening tool in high-risk patients.

“If someone is referred with hematuria or if there is a patient whom you suspect might have bladder cancer, the study shows that cystoscopy is still the best approach, although it is not perfect and can miss some tumors,” Dr. Grossman said. “A combination of tests—a urine assay plus cystoscopy—is still the best way to go. The attractiveness of this [NMP22] test is that it is cheaper, it can be conducted right on the spot, and it has a higher sensitivity, albeit a somewhat lower specificity, than cytology.”

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For additional information, or a reprint of the JAMA manuscript, please call 1-800-320-2521, press 1, or e-mail nmp22@matritech.com.