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The early detection of relapse following primary surgery for non-small cell lung cancer and the characterization of emerging subclones seeding metastatic sites might offer new therapeutic approaches to limit tumor recurrence. The potential to non-invasively track tumor evolutionary dynamics in ctDNA of early-stage lung cancer is not established. Here we conduct a tumour-specific phylogenetic approach to ctDNA profiling in the first 100 TRACERx (TRAcking non-small cell Lung Cancer Evolution through therapy (Rx)) study participants, including one patient co-recruited to the PEACE (Posthumous Evaluation of Advanced Cancer Environment) post-mortem study. We identify independent predictors of ctDNA release and perform tumor volume limit of detection analyses. Through blinded profiling of post-operative plasma, we observe evidence of adjuvant chemotherapy resistance and identify patients destined to experience recurrence of their lung cancer. Finally, we show that phylogenetic ctDNA profiling tracks the subclonal nature of lung cancer relapse and metastases, providing a new approach for ctDNA driven therapeutic studies.

General information

State: Published
Organisations: Department of Bio and Health Informatics, Cancer Genomics, CRUK Lung Cancer Centre of Excellence, Natera, Inc, University of Leicester, University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, The Francis Crick Institute, University College London Hospitals, Harvard Medical School, University of Manchester, Christie Hospital, University Hospital of South Manchester, Birmingham Heartlands Hospital, University of Birmingham, Aberdeen University Medical School & Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, Leicester University Hospitals, North Middlesex Hospital, Royal Free Hospital, The Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust, Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Ashford and St. Peters' Hospital, Velindre Hospital, University Hospital Llandough, University Hospital of Wales, University College London, Whittington Hospital NHS Trust, MAX DELBRUCK CENTER FOR MOLECULAR MEDICINE


Number of pages: 21
Pages: 446-451
Publication date: 2017
Peer-reviewed: Yes

Publication Information

Journal: Nature
Volume: 545
ISSN (Print): 0028-0836

Ratings:
BFI (2019): BFI-level 3
Web of Science (2019): Indexed yes
BFI (2018): BFI-level 3
Web of Science (2018): Indexed yes
BFI (2017): BFI-level 2
Scopus rating (2017): CiteScore 14.59
Web of Science (2017): Impact factor 19.181
Web of Science (2017): Indexed yes
BFI (2016): BFI-level 2
Scopus rating (2016): CiteScore 13.33
Web of Science (2016): Impact factor 19.304
Web of Science (2016): Indexed yes
BFI (2015): BFI-level 2
Scopus rating (2015): CiteScore 14.38
Web of Science (2015): Impact factor 17.184