Test could save thousands from most aggressive prostate cancer

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A TEST that can detect which men will develop the most aggressive form of prostate cancer could save thousands of lives each year, scientists believe.

Researchers at Nottingham Trent University have discovered that proteins PML and CRM-1 play a crucial role in allowing the disease to grow and to kill 10,000 men in Britain each year.

Scientists can now tell who will suffer aggressive prostate cancer, so it can be treated earlier – and they hope to find a way of preventing the two proteins from triggering the lethal spread.

The discovery may also reassure the 30,000 men diagnosed with prostate cancer who will not develop its most aggressive form, as they would not need such intensive treatment.

Dr Tarik Regad, lead researcher and senior scientist at the university's John van Geest cancer research centre, said: "Some prostate cancers will develop an aggressive form of disease, which spreads quickly and as a result leads to reduced life expectancy.

"It is, therefore, essential to identify new diagnostic and prognostic biomarkers which could be used for the identification and treatment of patients."

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer for UK men: more than 42,000 are diagnosed annually and it kills one in four. It often grows very slowly with many men dying of something else first and experts believe that small, non-aggressive tumours should be left alone.

Researchers followed 192 men with prostate cancer for up to 15 years, using tissue samples to spot changes as the disease progressed. The study, also involving Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust and the Royal Derby Hospital, is published in the Nature Publishing Group journal *Oncogene*.

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