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Perspective

A Brief Note on Tumor Markers

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DESCRIPTION

Tumor markers are biomarkers found in blood, urine, or tissues of the body and can be elevated by the presence of one or more types of cancer. There are many different tumor markers, each of which indicate a specific disease process and are used in oncology to detect the presence of cancer. Elevated levels of tumor markers may indicate cancer. However, there may be other reasons for the increase. Tumor markers are produced directly by the tumor or by non-tumor cells depending on the presence of the tumor. Tumor marker tests are usually not used to diagnose cancer or screen people at low risk for the disease because tumor markers can also occur in certain non-cancerous diseases. These tests are most commonly done on people who have already been diagnosed with cancer. Tumor markers help determine if the cancer has spread, if the treatment is working, or if the cancer has recurred after the treatment is finished.

Tumor marker tests can also be used to look for cancer in people who are at high risk of developing the disease. When the doctor first discovers the cancer, there are these tests to find out more about the cancer. Tumor marker testing is not perfect. They are often not cancer-specific and may not be sensitive enough to detect a recurrence of the cancer. The presence of tumor markers alone is not enough to diagnose cancer. Other tests may be needed to find out more about the possibility of cancer or recurrence. Here are some limitations of tumor marker testing: Non-cancerous conditions or diseases can increase tumor marker levels. People without cancer can have high levels of tumor markers. Tumor marker levels can change over time. The test does not always give the same result. Tumor marker levels may not rise until the cancer worsens. This does not help detect cancer in early or high-risk individuals. Finding a replay doesn't help either. Some cancers do not produce the tumor markers found in the blood. Also, some cancers do not have known tumor markers. Even if the type of cancer usually produces tumor markers, tumor marker levels may not increase.

Application of tumor marker testing

People have cancer: Higher levels of tumor markers may indicate a particular type of cancer. Tumor marker testing can be used as part of the initial diagnosis.

Guided treatment decisions: A few tumor marker test's will also conform whether to administer chemotherapy or immunotherapy. Others help doctors choose the most effective drug.

Check the progress of treatment: Changes in tumor marker levels can indicate how well the treatment is working.

Predicting the likelihood of recovery: Tumor markers help doctors predict cancer behavior and response to treatment. It can also predict the chances of recovery.

Predicting or monitoring recurrence: Recurrence occurs when the cancer recurs after treatment. Tumor marker tests can help predict how likely this is. For this reason, these tests may be part of the post-treatment follow-up. They can help find a recurrence faster than other tests.

CONCLUSION

A member of the health care team will take a blood or urine samples from patients. Samples are sent to the lab for testing. Some tests may need to be done multiple times because the levels of tumor markers can change on a regular basis. They also need other tests to find the cancer and check its treatment. This is because the results of tumor markers are limited and may be incorrect. They can show that the tumor is growing when it is present or not. In other cases, it may indicate that the tumor is not present, or that the treatment is working when the tumor is not present.

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