

PRESS RELEASE

Czech scientists present a unique technology to detect the relapse of colorectal cancer, which can prolong patients' lives.

Prague, 13th June 2019 – A team of Czech scientists from the Elphogene company presents a unique diagnostic method called oncoMonitor™, which offers cancer survivors an improvement in regular control screening aimed at the verification of their treatment's success or timely detection of the disease's recurrence.

The Prague-based biotechnological start-up Elphogene has received an initial investment from i&i Prague in order to implement its oncoMonitor™, a liquid biopsy technology into a commercial assay for non-invasive diagnostic monitoring of patients in advanced stages colorectal cancer. This method brings a key benefit of personalized testing to detect potential new metastases and the timely option to select a further treatment.

"We have completed pilot studies demonstrating the analytical sensitivity of the oncoMonitor™ assay, and the data were presented at the annual conference of American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) in Atlanta, USA, in April. We are very happy with the results of this test, which can be applied universally to various forms of solid tumors, and currently, we are initiating clinical validation in cooperation with leading domestic oncological centers," says Dr. Marek Minarik, Co-Founder and General Manager of Elphogene.

The company has been founded earlier this year as a spin-off from the Genomac research institute, a leading Czech private research center widely recognized for its strong record of scientific projects in clinical cancer genomics. Originally developed at Genomac and now exclusively owned by Elphogene, the oncoMonitor™ liquid biopsy technology, will further be developed and validated in a clinical setting at company headquarters and laboratories located near Prague Vaclav Havel airport in Ruzyne.

The initial investment was provided by the i&i Prague company, which is a leading Central European biotechnological incubator and investment center providing financial support to promising projects in the field of living-nature science, biotechnology and modern medicine. *"Liquid biopsy is a newly emerging field with fascinating growth potential, destined to change modern medicine from diagnostics to therapy fundamentally. We have been following the oncoMonitor™ technology for some time, and we are now excited to collaborate with the team at Elphogene in its clinical implementation "*, says Dr. Jaromir Zahradka, the CEO and a co-founder of i&i Prague.

In the long run, the Czech Republic has been occupying leading places in patients with colorectal carcinoma. Thanks to extensive campaigns aimed at the importance of screening and early detection of colorectal carcinoma, the number of patients who lose their fight with this insidious disease has been dropping. On the other hand, there is an ongoing lack of non-invasive methods which help post-op detection of recurring cancer activity and prolonging the lives of patients in advanced stages of the disease.

According to the available data from the National Cancer Registry, a total of 7800 patients was newly diagnosed with colorectal carcinoma in 2016, 1508 of which suffered verifiably from advanced stages with the occurrence of metastases. In the same year, almost 4 thousand patients succumbed to this disease. To compare the occurrence of colorectal carcinoma in Europe, according to the 2018 data by Globocan, the Czech Republic takes the 15th place in the number of newly diagnosed cases and the 18th place in death rate. In a whole-world comparison, it takes the 23rd place in newly diagnosed cases and the 22nd place in death rate. Colorectal cancer usually appears in older patients, and in the Czech Republic, colorectal carcinoma is a more frequent phenomenon in men.