CANCER

Biochemists at the University of Texas at Austin plan to use the research to develop a lab-on-a-chip diagnostic test for detecting cancer before a tumor forms. Such a test would allow patients to be tested for breast cancer during a visit to a dentist.

Streckfus notes that most patients, especially women and children, visit dental offices more often than they visit a physician. He adds that being able to distinguish between benign and malignant tumors through a saliva test would eliminate false positive results, enabling doctors and dentists to immediately determine the next step in a patient’s treatment.

“The research found unique proteins for the fibroadenoma benign tumor, the most common benign breast tumor,” Streckfus says.

Over the next 25 years, 25 million women throughout the world are expected to develop breast cancer, and 10 million are projected to die from the disease.

Streckfus collaborated on the study with William Dubinsky, Ph.D., a biochemist and professor of integrative biology and pharmacology at the University of Texas Medical School at Houston, and Lenora Bigler, Ph.D., a clinical research professor with the UT Dental Branch.

(By John Hoffman, News Editor. Article based on materials supplied by the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.)