



To News Editor
For Immediate Release

16 July 2008

CUHK launches a Community-based Nasopharyngeal Cancer Screening Program for 1,000 Asymptomatic Hong Kong Residents

Nasopharyngeal cancer (NPC) is one of the commonest cancers in Hong Kong and South China. The incidence of NPC is highest among people aged 40 to 60. The prognosis of this cancer is significantly dependent on the extent of disease at diagnosis. For patients with early-staged disease (i.e. stages I and II), localized radiotherapy alone can give a 5-year survival of over 85%. On the contrary, patients with more advanced disease require more extensive radiotherapy and systemic chemotherapy, and have worse prognosis. For example, the 5-year survival rate for stage IV patients is only 50%. Therefore, early detection is an important strategy in the management of NPC. The gold standard of diagnosing NPC is by endoscopic examination of the nasopharynx. However, limited by its invasive nature and availability, nasal endoscopy is not an ideal tool for screening NPC in asymptomatic subjects.

The development of NPC is closely linked with Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) infection. Making use of this association, the Department of Chemical Pathology at The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) established a blood test in 1999 for the detection of NPC based on the measurement of the genetic material of EBV (EBV DNA) in plasma. To date, the plasma EBV DNA analysis has been shown to be useful for the detection and monitoring of this cancer in patients presented with clinical symptoms. The test accuracy for NPC detection is over 95% and it is one of the most accurate blood-based tumor markers currently available.

With the generous support from Sir Michael and Lady Betty Kadoorie, CUHK is launching a community-based study to further investigate the effectiveness of this blood test for screening early NPC in asymptomatic individuals in end of July. In this study, 1,000 volunteers aged 40 to 60 with no clinical symptoms of NPC will be invited to enroll in a 2-year NPC screening program. During which, participants will be screened for NPC using the plasma EBV DNA test on 3 serial time points: at the time of enrolment, at 6 months and 18 months after the first test. Test-positive individuals will be referred to the Department of Otorhinolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery of CUHK for further investigations, including an endoscopic examination of the nasopharynx, to confirm or exclude NPC. The objective of this study is to demonstrate that this blood test is useful for detecting early NPC in asymptomatic individuals, thereby improving their overall survival and minimizing treatment-associated side effects.

Twelve community visits at 6 residential areas in Shatin will be organized for educating the public about NPC and subject recruitment. One thousand Hong Kong citizens aged 40 to 60 who do not have a personal history of cancers or immune-related disorders and are not on immunosuppressants will be recruited in these community visits. The general public are welcome to attend the health talk which will be delivered in Cantonese. No prior reservation is needed for attending the health talk. After the talk, up to 100 subjects who fulfill the screening criteria of the NPC blood test will be selected by drawing lots in each community visit. Each subject will then be assigned a time slot from 1:30pm to 5:00pm for blood taking on that day.

Date	Venue
27 July 2008	Lung Hang Community Centre
10 August 2008	Pok Hong Community Hall
17 August 2008	Pok Hong Community Hall
24 August 2008	Kwong Yuen Community Hall
31 August 2008	Lung Hang Community Centre
20 September 2008	Buddhist Kok Kwong Secondary School (Tentative), Sha Kok Estate
28 September 2008	Lung Hang Community Centre
12 October 2008	Buddhist Kok Kwong Secondary School (Tentative), Sha Kok Estate
19 October 2008	City One Shatin Community Hall
26 October 2008	City One Shatin Community Hall
2 November 2008	District Councillor's Office, Mei Lam Estate
9 November 2008	District Councillor's Office, Mei Lam Estate

Note: Quota of free NPC blood tests per visit is 100

1:00pm – 1:30pm Health Talk: Introduction to NPC Screening Program
 1:30pm – 5:00pm Subject Recruitment and Blood Collection

Please refer to the website <http://www.med.cuhk.edu.hk/v7/> for the latest update about the NPC screening program.



致新聞編輯
請即發放

及早診斷鼻咽癌 中大為千名本港市民進行免費血液測試

鼻咽癌是香港與南中國最常見的癌症之一，病發高峰年齡為 40 至 60 歲，其致病成因與 EB 病毒感染有密切關係。患有早期鼻咽癌（第一及第二期）的病人，只需接受局部放射治療，其五年存活率已可達百分之八十五。但患有晚期鼻咽癌的病人，除放射治療外，還需接受包括化療的系統性治療，而其存活率亦明顯較低，例如第四期病人的五年存活率只有約五成。因此，及早診斷鼻咽癌對治療成效至為重要。鼻咽內視鏡檢查是目前診斷鼻咽癌的標準方法，但由於屬創傷性檢查方法，且須由耳鼻喉專科醫生操作，輪候檢查時間較長，因此並不適用於全民鼻咽癌篩查。

有見及此，香港中文大學（中大）醫學院化學病理學系於 1999 年成功研發一項無創傷性的測試方法，以定量分析血液中的 EB 病毒基因來診斷鼻咽癌。過去 9 年的研究顯示，此血液測試能為已出現病徵的鼻咽癌病人作準確的診斷和監測，其準確度超過 95%，是目前其中一種準確度最高的癌症血液測試。

為進一步了解此血液測試能否為早期但沒有病徵的鼻咽癌患者作出準確的診斷，在米高嘉道理爵士及夫人的慷慨支持下，中大醫學院化學病理學系將於今年七月底開展一項以社區為基礎的兩年研究計劃，邀請 1,000 名年齡介乎 40 至 60 歲及沒有鼻咽癌病徵的香港市民參與，進行三次免費鼻咽癌血液測試。第一次血液測試會在參加者加入計劃時進行，第二次及第三次血液測試則分別在第一次檢驗後的第六個月和第十八個月進行。對鼻咽癌血液測試呈陽性反應的參加者，會被轉介至中大耳鼻喉-頭頸外科學系進行鼻咽內視鏡檢查，以確定是否患上鼻咽癌。此計劃希望能為早期但沒有病徵的鼻咽癌患者及早作出診斷，從而提高痊癒的機會及減少治療相關的併發症。

為招募參加者及提高市民對鼻咽癌的認識，中大將會在今年 7 月至 11 月期間在沙田區六個大型屋苑舉行 12 次招募會，以及進行有關鼻咽癌血液測試的健康講座。凡年齡介乎 40 至 60 歲、未曾患任何癌症或免疫系統疾病，以及並無服用免疫抑制劑的香港市民均歡迎參與這項研究。有興趣人士可於下列日期到指定地點參加講座，無須預約。講座以廣東話進行，完畢後會即場抽籤選出 100 名合資格人士參與研究，並於同日下午 1:30 至 5:00 安排抽血。

日期	地點
2008年7月27日	隆亨社區中心
2008年8月10日	博康社區會堂
2008年8月17日	博康社區會堂
2008年8月24日	廣源社區會堂
2008年8月31日	隆亨社區中心
2008年9月20日	沙角邨佛教覺光法師中學(暫定)
2008年9月28日	隆亨社區中心
2008年10月12日	沙角邨佛教覺光法師中學(暫定)
2008年10月19日	沙田第一城會堂
2008年10月26日	沙田第一城會堂
2008年11月2日	美林邨議員辦事處
2008年11月9日	美林邨議員辦事處

註：每場鼻咽癌血液測試名額為 100 人

1:00pm – 1:30pm 健康講座：以血液測試診斷早期但無病徵的鼻咽癌
1:30pm – 5:00pm 招募參加者及鼻咽癌血液測試

欲知計劃詳情及最新消息，可瀏覽 <http://www.med.cuhk.edu.hk/v7/>。

2008年7月16日