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# **INTERVIEW: Simple Blood Test Signals Lung Cancer Early - Study**

By Sten Stovall  
Of DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

A simple blood test that helps assess risk and early detection of lung cancer has shown good results in clinical trials presented Thursday at the World Congress on Lung Cancer in Amsterdam, offering promise of a means by which doctors could quickly distinguish normal from malignant lung nodules, improve patient follow-up treatment, and make early detection of high risk patients more cost effective.

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths in the U.S. and throughout the world. Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer is the most common form of the disease.

The U.S. study, begun in May 2009, used blood samples from just over 1,000 patients, submitted by their doctors in some 300 centers across 40 states. Called EarlyCDT(TM)-Lung, the blood test was conducted on ex-smokers or patients who still smoke and are deemed to be at risk of getting lung cancer.

"What this blood test does is measure a panel of six to seven antibodies to detect a signal, or biomarkers on the cancer," explained James Jett who presented the study's findings in Amsterdam. "In the patients who have the cancer, their body is developing antibody reaction to it and this test detects those antibodies."

The people tested were regarded as being at high-risk of getting lung cancer, but Jett, a professor of medicine at the National Jewish Health lung center in Denver, Colorado said, "this blood test has the potential to become wide-spread as a preventative test, such as in PSA testing for prostate cancer."

"It has the potential of detecting cancers 3 to 5 years in advance, but that's not the data that I'm showing here," he told Dow Jones Newswires in an interview. "I'm showing data on people who have been detected in a shorter time period. But that's the promise of a blood test, just like PSA for prostate cancer in which you can find the marker and it leads to a diagnosis earlier, with a better chance of cure."

He said the trial was made more exciting after a study was published last month in the New England Journal of Medicine that found there were 20% fewer deaths among 53,000

participating patients who underwent annual screening with a scanning procedure, known as a low-dose helical computed tomography, of CT, compared with those who got standard chest X-rays.

"That is huge! It's probably the biggest lung cancer finding in my entire career," Jett said.

"But that CT study still missed a number of cancers while a number of people also had abnormalities on CT who didn't actually have cancer. So everyone is looking for a blood test to help further refine who should go through further testing and when should you get more aggressive at trying to make an earlier diagnosis. So I think that's the promise of this test. It's as far along if not further along than any other blood test I know about for lung cancer."

The blood test EarlyCDT-Lung is based on biological technology identified by John Robertson, a professor of surgery at Nottingham University, England and chief scientific officer of Oncimmune LTD. "I have no IP and I have no stock in Oncimmune," Jett said.

"I'll now be the lead investigator in the prospective screening trial that's due to launch in the next month or two in the U.S., where we'll be using 1,600 participants, in a trial where you do the CT scan and the blood test at the same time."

"CT has been shown to decrease lung cancer deaths due to earlier detection. The goal for us is to see if this combination even improves on that. And then maybe even helps us to manage some of the indeterminate spots that show up on CT scans, how to manage those in the long run."