UnitedHealthcare to provide cancer patients test to choose best chemotherapy

UnitedHealthcare and DiaTech Life Sciences partner to provide cancer patients with assay that can determine best chemotherapy treatment

UnitedHealthcare and DiaTech Life Sciences will provide the MiCK assay (test) to oncologists in selected markets in order to determine the best chemotherapy treatment for cancer patients. This technology is expected to significantly improve the cancer treatment practice and provide better health outcomes. Currently oncologists prescribe chemotherapy treatment based on empirical research collected and evaluated on specific cancers. The MiCK assay allows cancer patients to receive an individualized report measuring sensitivity of selected chemo drugs and assisting the oncologist in selection of the personalized treatment most likely to succeed.

"Unlike other chemosensitivity assays in the market, the MiCK assay is the only test that measures apoptosis (cancer cell death) kinetically with results reported in 3 days. This distinction is significant and allows us to predict the best chemotherapy treatment for most cancer patients. We now have the data that proves this technology works and are pleased to be working with UnitedHealthcare. In addition, the test can guide a physician on choosing between single drug or combination treatments and whether to use less expensive generic drugs or newer proprietary drugs based on which drugs will give the patient the most effective response," said Dr. Cary Presant, DiaTech Medical Director, and Professor of Clinical Medicine at the University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine.

It has long been known that chemotherapy drugs used to treat cancer will cause the cancer cells that are sensitive to the drugs to undergo a process of self-destruction, called *apoptosis*. Measuring the amount of drug-induced apoptosis in a patient's tumor cells in the lab *prior* to the drug treatment in the patient helps to select drugs to which tumor cells of the patient are sensitive and, thus, to increase the success rate of the patient's cancer chemotherapy. To measure drug-induced apoptosis, DiaTech utilizes a proprietary technology called Microculture Kinetic (MiCK) test for apoptosis. In the MiCK assay the tumor cells of an individual patient are exposed to multiple doses of several chemotherapeutic drugs. A sophisticated lab analysis of the cancer cells is used to monitor and compute the amounts of apoptosis caused by each of the drugs to establish a *drug sensitivity profile* of the patient's tumor cells. Knowledge of a patient's drug sensitivity profile allows the treating oncologists to prescribe chemotherapy that is the most effective against the tumor cells of that patient. This helps the patient to receive the drugs most likely to produce a remission, keep the patient cured, and avoid unnecessary toxicity or side effects. This can also reduce the cost of a patient's treatments by avoiding drugs that are unlikely to work or by indicating when generic drugs are as likely to work as more expensive alternatives.

UnitedHealthcare (www.unitedhealthcare.com) provides a full spectrum of consumer-oriented health benefits plans and services to individuals, public sector employers and businesses of all sizes, including more than half of the Fortune 100 companies. The company organizes access to quality, affordable health care services on behalf of approximately 25 million individual consumers, contracting directly with more than 600,000 physicians and health care professionals and 5,000 hospitals to offer them broad, convenient access to services nationwide. UnitedHealthcare is part of the UnitedHealth Group (NYSE: UNH), a diversified Fortune 50 health and well-being company.

DiaTech Life Sciences is a privately held clinical pathology laboratory working to help oncologists and their patients deal with the devastating effects of cancer. The MiCK assay is the only test available that measures the chemotherapeutic drug effect for a specific patient, both kinetically and accurately. The MiCK assay has also been used to determine the effectiveness of new drugs in preclinical trials for the pharmaceutical industry.

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