Five new genetic markers for pancreatic cancer identified

After comparing the DNA of thousands of people with and without the disease, a new study has identified five genetic markers for pancreatic cancer that raise the risk for developing the deadly disease.

The international consortium of scientists reports the findings in the journal *Nature Genetics*. The discovery is the result of a third project in a series of genome-wide association studies that began in 2006 under the auspices of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) Cohort Consortium.

Pancreatic cancer is a cancer that occurs in the cells lining the ducts or the islet cells of the pancreas, a digestive organ that sits in the upper abdomen surrounded by the stomach, small intestine, liver, spleen and gall bladder.

A screening tool to identify people at increased risk for pancreatic cancer could help identify those who might be candidates to undergo MRI or ultrasound scanning to look for early, treatable pancreatic tumors, he notes.

This new study, PanScan III, brings to nine the total number of significant genetic markers that the scientists have discovered for pancreatic cancer. The markers are single-nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs or ‘snips’), where a single letter variation occurs in a sequence of DNA in the genome. For instance, in one person the sequence could be AAGCCTA, while in another person, in the same location on the genome, the sequence might be one letter different: AAGCTTA.

Read the full, original story: Pancreatic cancer study finds new genetic risk markers