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# City firm develops kit to diagnose prostate cancer

## Products to be sold to researchers first

By: Murray McNeill

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Christopher Moreau

A Winnipeg medical diagnostic company has developed a new kit that could make it easier to diagnose patients with prostate cancer.

Miraculins Inc. will start off selling the kit to prostate-cancer researchers, who will hopefully use it in their clinical studies and build up a body of data on how well it performs.

If it performs well, the company hopes to eventually seek government approval for the kit to be used by doctors, which would open the door to a much bigger market for the product.

"Research-only kits have a limited market," Miraculins president and CEO Christopher Moreau said in an interview Thursday. "So this is not a huge, huge development for Miraculins."

But if the kit is eventually approved for use by physicians, that's a whole different ball game, he added.

He said there are hundreds of thousands of biopsies ordered each year for patients who are suspected of having prostate cancer and the majority of them come back negative. If doctors had an easier, less costly tool for screening patients, they might not have to order as many biopsies, he added.

"So the potential for this test in the future is that it has the potential to reduce the number of biopsies. And that would have a significant impact on the health-care system."

Moreau said it's impossible to say if or when the company might seek approval for the kit to be used by doctors. That largely depends on the response from researchers and the length of time it takes to build up a suitable body of data on its performance and usefulness.

The launch of this new kit comes less than a week after Miraculins announced it had acquired the worldwide rights to a new technology that can detect high levels of cholesterol in patients through a simple skin test.

An official with a Toronto-based investment bank said that diagnostic kit, which has already been cleared for use by doctors in North America and Europe, has the potential to generate tens of millions of dollars a year in revenues for Miraculins.

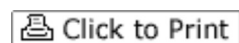
The new prostate-cancer kit, which took several years to develop, measures the amount of a particular amino acid protein -- called PSP94 -- in a urine sample from a patient. PSP94 is found in the cells of the prostate, and there's a growing body of medical evidence to suggest men with prostate cancer have reduced levels of it in their urine.

But Miraculins said further research is also needed to confirm the validity of PSP94 as a biomarker for prostate cancer.

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