This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Assays & screens			
A refined, allele-specific quantitative PCR assay called Intplex for analysis of circulating cell-free DNA (cfDNA) mutations	Intplex could be used to characterize small, highly fragmented, tumor-derived cfDNA for diagnostic applications. Current cfDNA sequencing methods have difficulty determining the presence of point mutations in fragments smaller than 100 base pairs. In tumor tissue samples from patients with metastatic colorectal cancer, tumor tissue analysis methods detected <i>K-Ras</i> (<i>KRAS</i>) mutations in 36 of 95 samples and the <i>BRAF</i> <i>V600E</i> mutation in 5 of 95 samples. In plasma samples from the same patients, Intplex detected <i>KRAS</i> mutations in 37 of 95 samples and <i>BRAF</i> <i>V600E</i> mutations in 5 of 95 samples, giving a concordance of 96% and 100%. Ongoing work includes using Intplex to characterize samples from larger patient cohorts.	Patented; exclusively licensed to an undisclosed company	Thierry, A.R. <i>et al. Nat. Med.</i> ; published online March 23, 2014; doi:10.1038/nm.3511 Contact: Alain R. Thierry, Montpellier Cancer Research Institute, Montpellier, France e-mail: alain.thierry@inserm.fr
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