New blood test identifies "Sudden Cardiac Death" risk

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UAntwerp (University of Antwerp), UZA (Antwerp University Hospital), and Multiplicom NV, a specialist in the development, production and commercialization of innovative molecular genetic tests, together developed a blood test to determine the genetic risk of "Sudden Cardiac Death" (SCD). This test, called PED MASTR, is already in use at the center of medical genetics of UZA/UAntwerp and will be launched worldwide from September 2014.

SCD, which affects one in a thousand people, can be reduced with the PED MASTR. Especially young, seemingly healthy individuals are affected by SCD, as indicated by the regular reports of the unexpected death of young athletes during a sports competition or - training.

The heart rhythm abnormalities linked with these deaths are unfortunately difficult to detect, even for cardiologists. Genetic predisposition plays an important role as family members of affected individuals have a 50% risk of inheriting the same genetic predisposition to develop cardiac disease. Early detection of hereditary [heart disease](http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/237191.php) in high-risk families can save lives. With the development of the PED MASTR it has become feasible and fast to fully analyze the high number of genes involved for SCD causing mutations.

"This new kit, using our MASTR technology, comprising 51 genes, allows physicians to identify all genetic mutations at once and use this information to propose appropriate treatment. This has been a unique project, bringing together the expertise of clinicians, geneticists and diagnostic developers to deliver to society a product that will save young lives", said dr. Dirk Pollet, CEO of Multiplicom. According to prof. Bart Loeys, prof. Christiaan Vrints, and dr. Johan Saenen, all UZA/UAntwerp, this new test accelerates the diagnostic process in patients or family members experiencing SCD. "This test nicely complements our existing clinical cardiac- and genetic expertise and offers the option to pre-symptomatic but mutation-carrying individuals to implement preventive measures to avoid SCD." This new product has been developed with the support of the IWT (Agency for Innovation by Science and Technology).