

BIOMEDICINE**Hold your breath: Lung cancer screens?**

Lung cancer is one of the most common and most deadly cancers. Only about 12 percent of lung cancers are cured, primarily because few lung cancers are caught before they spread.

Studies have suggested that X-ray screening for lung cancer is ineffective. According to the July 10 *LANCET*, low-dose computed tomography (CT) that allows doctors to completely scan the lung during a single breath may change that picture.

Among 1,000 men and women who had smoked at least a pack of cigarettes a day for 10 years, CT scans detected cancer in 27 patients; X rays found cancer in just 7 of these people. CT also detected substantially smaller malignant tumors than those found by chest X rays.

"Detecting more cancers in earlier stages changes survival prospects from dismal to very positive," says Claudia I. Henschke of New York Presbyterian Hospital. Thus, CT screening may prove more effective than mammograms at saving lives, she says.

—D.C.