

Cancer breakthrough announced

Canadian researchers say they have discovered that some breast-cancer tumours contain a protein that can be used to determine a woman's chances of recovery.

"The women who have this protein in the tumour live much longer and they respond to therapy better than women who don't have it, Dr. Eleftherios Diamandis, the lead researcher and associate professor at the University of Toronto, said this week.

The protein, known as prostate-specific antigen, was thought previously to exist only in the prostate glands of men.

"We found it in women by accident, when one of my students tested a breast-tumour extract, thinking it was from the prostate," Dr. Eleftherios said. For some unknown reason, about 30 per cent of breast-cancer tumours produce prostate-specific antigen, he said, "and there really is a substantial difference in the survival of these patients." Women with prostate-specific antigen live three times as long as those without it, according to the study.

— *Paul Taylor*