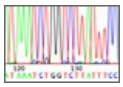
'Junk' DNA found to be highly expressed in cancer cells.

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Traditional cancer researchers investigating the genetics of the disease have focused on protein-coding genes (tumor-suppressors and oncogenes). The majority of our DNA does **not** encode proteins and the functions of this large amount of material has only recently received a great deal of attention. Some non-coding DNA sequences are repeated thousands of times and can be scattered across many or all of our chromosomes. The function of the RNA derived from these sequences is not always clear. Some of the RNAs control gene expression and others seem to have a structural role in chrommosomes.

A new research study looked at the non-coding DNA sequences in mouse and human tumor samples and the results are very surprising and intriguing. The non-coding sequences were found to be expressed (transcribed) over 100 times more than would be expected in normal tissues. The impact of this over-expression on the development of cancer is not yet known. It is possible that this could lead to early detection tests for a variety of cancers.

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