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Health newsfeed for Wednesday, October 3, 2012

HEADLINE: BREAST CANCER SUBTYPES

ANCHOR LEAD: A NEW STUDY DIVIDES BREAST CANCER INTO FOUR DISTINCT GROUPS, BUT MAY NOT IMPACT TREATMENT, ELIZABETH TRACEY REPORTS

Breast cancers fall into one of four groups, based not just on their genes but a host of other factors, a study in the journal Nature concludes. Ben Park, a breast cancer expert at Johns Hopkins, says in spite of the hoopla, this study doesn't break new ground.

PARK: The sobering truth is that really, this has not told us anything dramatically new or different, that a lot of the genes that were found to be mutated were found even as long ago as 2006. The reality of the situation for breast cancer is that there are really only a handful of genes that are mutated at high frequency. And I think that what this study did that was a little bit more comprehensive was they integrated other technologies so that they weren't looking at just gene mutations they were looking at expression, at methylation, at various proteins that get activated and not. :31

Park says analysis of breast tumors and their further characterization is already part of clinical management of the disease, so at best, this study points the way for new research. At Johns Hopkins, I'm Elizabeth Tracey.