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Yale researchers devise diagnostic test for viral diseases

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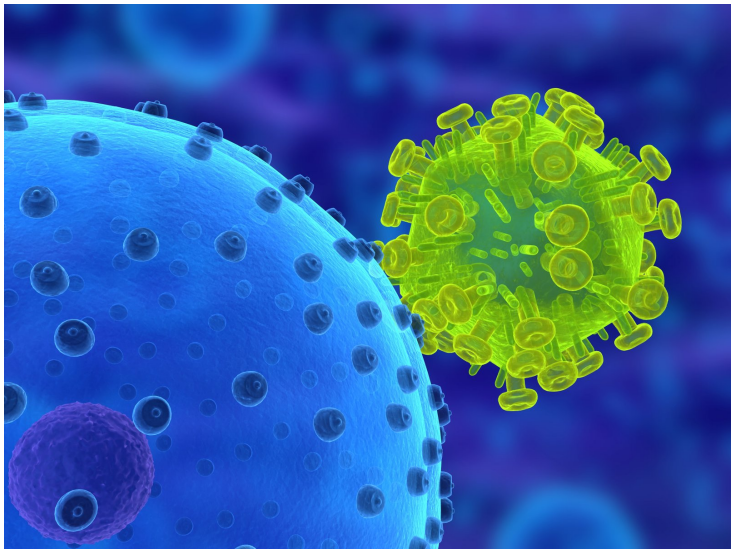
Performed with a simple nasal swab, the test could prove to be a quicker, cheaper way to diagnose respiratory viral illnesses.



According to a new study conducted by researchers at Yale University, a new test that measures RNA or protein molecules in human cells can accurately identify viral infection as a cause of respiratory symptoms.

To identify biomarkers of viral infection applicable to many different respiratory viruses, the researchers tested human nasal cells in the laboratory.

With genetic sequencing techniques, the researchers screened the cells for mRNAs and proteins that increase when a virus is present.

Performed with a simple nasal swab, the test could prove to be a quicker, cheaper way to diagnose respiratory viral illnesses than current methods. The test could also help reduce the misuse of antibiotics to treat viral infections.

The research team's goal is to create a gene- or protein-based test available for general use within one to five years.