



Surfix, the Netherlands Cancer Institute and Wageningen University & Research collaborate to improve patient outcomes in hypocortisolism by point of care testing based medical devices to revolutionise healthcare

Amsterdam and Wageningen, Netherlands, July 2025: Today, Surfix alongside the Netherlands Cancer Institute (NKI) and Wageningen University & Research (WUR), have launched a collaborative initiative to improve outcomes for cancer patients receiving immunotherapy treatment, who are therefore at risk of developing adrenal insufficiency. By combining cutting-edge photonic technology with world-class medical and academic expertise, the partners aim to detect cortisol deficiencies early—at the point of care—helping to prevent irreversible damage. The new partnership is established in the YoloFitis project, supported by a PPP grant from the TKI-program Life Sciences & Health of Health~Holland.

The project focuses on patients undergoing neoadjuvant immunotherapy, a treatment approach now standard for several cancer types, including lung, breast, and melanoma. As survival rates rise, the spotlight shifts to managing long-term side effects of treatment. One such complication, hypocortisolism—also known as Addison’s Disease—is a chronic immune-related adverse event (irAE) that can significantly impair quality of life and lead to serious health consequences.

Early detection and continuous monitoring is critical. Patients with Addison’s Disease typically require lifelong steroid therapy, which rarely aligns with the body’s natural cortisol cycles. With more responsive, real-time testing at the point of care, treatments can be better tailored, improving outcomes and empowering patients to take an active role in managing their health, and potentially improve the short-term and long-term outcome of patients.

The partners will focus on developing a combined cortisol and IL-6 point-of-care test. This integrated solution is designed to enable early detection of hypocortisolism, ideally before the condition becomes chronic. NKI has developed this test previously and Surfix provides a unique photonic diagnostics platform that consists of a microfluidic test cartridge and a read-out instrument. Blinded studies on detection of the inflammation marker interleukin-6 (IL-6) have shown that the Surfix platform prototype is more sensitive than current golden standard laboratory tests. Surfix is a spin-off from WUR and they will collaborate in this project to further enhance Surfix’s platform technology.

In the Yolofitis project, Surfix, NKI and WUR collaborate to develop a cortisol and IL-6 diagnostic point-of-care test to facilitate early hypocortisolism detection, preferably before this irAE becomes chronic.

Voices from the Consortium

Jos Lunenberg, CEO of Surfix, shared: "Our innovative photonic diagnostics platform is ideally suited for patient monitoring where minor changes in markers can have a significant impact. To be able to demonstrate our platforms capabilities and improving patient outcomes is a great opportunity."

Prof. Dr. Christian Blank, group leader at NKI, added: "With this collaboration, we're bringing together the best of science, clinical care, and technology to meet an urgent patient need. Early and accessible detection can fundamentally change the way we manage immune-related side effects."

Prof. Dr. Han Zuilhof, of the department of Organic Chemistry at WUR: "The Yolofitis project brings together top-tier academic and applied science expertise to tackle a real world healthcare issue, we're proud to be a part of it."

About the Partners

Surfix's mission is to advance global health by delivering accurate, accessible, and affordable diagnostic solutions for disease detection and management, specifically in underserved Point-of-Care (POC) testing segments. To achieve this goal, Surfix has developed a photonic diagnostics platform that delivers exceptional sensitivity, accuracy, and a broad dynamic range for immunoassays. This cutting-edge technology enables diagnostics with precision surpassing traditional laboratory standards. Surfix's objective is to continuously enhance the platform, ensuring it remains easy to use while offering reliable and sensitive detection of a wide array of biomarkers.

NKI, founded in 1913, is among the top 10 comprehensive cancer centers, combining world-class fundamental, translational, and clinical research with dedicated patient care. Their initiatives to promote excellent translational research have been recognized by the European Academy of Cancer Sciences designation of 'Comprehensive Cancer Center of Excellence in Translational Research'. Christian Blank and his group focus on combination immune checkpoint inhibition. While initially being interested in stage IV disease treatment, they have pioneered neoadjuvant checkpoint inhibition in the last years, with the overall goal to develop personalized therapies, so that every melanoma patient can be offered a customized therapy within the next years.

WUR is a joined force between Wageningen University and the specialised research institutes of the Wageningen Research foundation. Their mission is to explore the potential of nature to improve the quality of life. The strength of WUR lies in its ability to join the forces of specialized research institutes and the university. It also lies in the combined efforts of the various fields of natural and social sciences.

This union of expertise leads to scientific breakthroughs that can quickly be put into practice and be incorporated into education. This is the Wageningen Approach.

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