Ring, Ring: Cell Phones That Test for HIV?

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Scientists from the University of California in Los Angeles converted an ordinary mobile phone into an inexpensive portable blood analyzer that can detect diseases such as HIV and malaria, reports Science Daily. The device could possibly save lives in poorer countries that can't afford expensive testing equipment.

Aydogan Ozcan, PhD, MS, BS, a UCLA researcher, developed the software that allows blood samples to be analyzed with off-the-shelf camera sensors and a filtered light source. The key is the software's ability to analyze thousands of blood cells at once, providing accurate results in minutes.

"This technology will not only have great impact in health care applications, it also has the potential to replace cytometers in research labs at a fraction of the cost," said Ozcan.

Blood analysis usually involves large and expensive machinery or a trained technician to manually examine the material. Neither necessity is accessible to remote areas in Africa or other Third World countries.

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