

In Brief: Gold nanoparticles might fight cancer

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Alabama scientists are considering using gold nanoparticles to turn near-infrared laser light into a "thermal scalpel" of intense heat to kill tumor cells.

University of Alabama at Birmingham scientists say they have successfully piggybacked as many as 1,000 gold nanoparticles onto an adenovirus capable of zooming in on tumor cells.

"Achieving progress in retargeting adenoviral vectors for cancer gene therapy led us to hypothesize that gold nanoparticles could be coupled with this vector to combine hyperthermia and gene therapy as a therapeutic approach. Now we are investigating the tumor-killing properties of this hybrid," said Dr. David Curiel.

The research -- detailed in the journal *Nano Letters* -- was funded by the National Cancer Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health.

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