Maybe getting a handle on prostate cancer diagnosis

By ACSH Staff — December 12, 2012

A new method of prostate cancer testing could potentially put an end to painful prostate biopsies that often miss the actual tumor.

The small size of the prostate gland makes it very difficult to reach, forcing doctors to do a so-called blind biopsy, in which multiple chunks of tissue are removed. A doctor can only hope that one of those chunks is a piece of the tumor that will allow them to determine the state of the cancer. But often, this is not the case.

New technology combining MRI and ultrasound technology can be used to guide the needle towards the prostate tumor, solving the dangerous and painful process of blind biopsies. From the 171 men who volunteered to try the new method, prostate tumors were identified in 53 percent of the men, researchers reported in the *Journal of Urology*.

These findings could help address one of the biggest issues regarding prostate cancer what to do when you have an elevated PSA. says ACSH s Dr. Josh Bloom. The current choices are to do nothing, or to subject yourself to a very flawed and invasive biopsy. Furthermore, a natural extension of this technique would be to use it as a confirmatory test to see if an elevated PSA blood test actually indicated that a tumor was present. This extra piece of the puzzle would make the PSA test more relevant and useful than it currently is.