



*Scientists are working
to harness dogs'
ability to sniff
out cancer.*

When it comes to detecting cancer, our dogs appear to have much keener senses than we do.

Take the special-needs teacher in Kent, England, who in 2015 noticed that her German shepherd, Inca, had become unusually interested in smelling her breath. She went to the doctor for a check-up and found out she had lung cancer. Because of the dog, she believes, it was diagnosed early, at stage 1.

The same year, a 40-year-old Rochester, Minnesota, woman was studying for a university test when her golden retriever-St. Bernard mix started nosing at her left side and acting crazy. When she went to brush away the dog slobber, she felt a lump. She was later diagnosed with breast cancer.

Actress Shannen Doherty — famous for her roles in the TV show "Beverly Hills 90210" and the movie "Heathers" — reported a similar experience with her German shepherd Bowie; now, she's undergoing treatment for breast cancer.

Google "My dog detected my cancer" and you'll find dozens of similar anecdotes, from all over the world. In fact, anecdotes about such occurrences go back decades. There's no proof that any of these pet dogs, untrained in cancer detection, truly found the disease. Still, what was once just fun material for tabloids or an offbeat research topic is now beginning to gain a toehold in the mainstream, with research teams and nonprofit organizations gnawing at the problem worldwide.