

Aggressive cancers in ‘evolutionary arms race’ with the

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Aggressive and highly-mutated cancers are engaged in an “evolutionary arms race” with the immune system, new research suggests.

Gullet and stomach cancers with faults in their systems for repairing DNA build up huge numbers of genetic mutations which make them resistant to treatments like chemotherapy.

But these numerous mutations mean they appear foreign to the immune system, leaving them vulnerable to attack, and susceptible to new immunotherapies.

Scientists at the Institute of Cancer Research, London (ICR), found that these “hyper-mutant” tumours rapidly evolve strategies to disguise themselves from the immune system and evade attack.

They hope that in the future, the findings could help optimise treatment with immunotherapy, and other drugs such as chemotherapy.

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