

News story: Aviva deal boosts investment for UK breathalyser diagnosis firm

An award-winning Cambridge company that is developing a breathalyser as a tool to diagnose cancer and infectious and inflammatory diseases has secured investment from the venture capital arm of Aviva plc.

[Aviva Ventures](#), which provides early-stage investment to high-growth businesses, will promote [Owlstone Medical](#) in the healthcare sector and build awareness of breath biopsy as a new standard in diagnostics.

Owlstone Medical has now raised £19.3 million (\$23.5 million USD) to commercialise its [Breath Biopsy®](#) platform since a spin-out from Owlstone Inc last year.

[Aviva invests in Owlstone Medical](#)

Highly sensitive and selective

Owlstone Medical's breathalyser can be programmed to detect volatile organic compound (VOC) biomarkers of disease in breath and other bodily fluids.

Highly sensitive and selective, these tests allow for early diagnosis so that treatments are more effective and more lives can be saved.

The company is currently developing tests for lung and colorectal cancer, 2 of the most common cancer killers worldwide. It also sells its research and development tools and services to academic, clinical and pharma partners who want to develop breath-based diagnostics for their own applications.

The Owlstone breathalyser can be programmed to detect biomarkers of disease in breath and other bodily fluids.

Billy Boyle, co-founder and CEO at Owlstone Medical, said:

Investment from Aviva as one of the major global insurance brands further validates our FAIMS technology and breath biopsy as a new approach to medical diagnostics.

We are very pleased that Aviva is supporting us in our mission to save 100,000 lives and \$1.5 billion in healthcare costs.

How Innovate UK has supported

Total funding of £277,000 from Innovate UK since 2013 helped the company develop its core technology, a microchip field asymmetric ion mobility spectrometer (FAIMS) sensor.

We first supported a 2013 [Biomedical Catalyst](#) feasibility study into developing a diagnostic test for Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

That was followed by a funded [SBRI](#) contract in 2016 to match asthma patients to correct treatments. Wrong medication leads to 54,000 emergency hospital admissions for asthma sufferers every year in the UK – and some 1,200 deaths.

Invention of the Year

In December 2016, Owlstone Medical's breathalyser technology was recognised as Invention of the Year in the [Top 50 in Digital Health Awards](#) in San Francisco.