

Softbank leads \$165 M funding for Karius

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Karius will expand access to its proprietary microbial cell-free DNA technology to help doctors diagnose infectious diseases, broaden clinical development, and accelerate technology innovation



Japanese multinational conglomerate holding company SoftBank Group led the new funding round for US based firm Karius, the world leader in liquid biopsy for infectious diseases. Karius has secured \$165 million in a new funding, with additional participation from General Catalyst, HBM Healthcare Investments, and existing investors Khosla Ventures and LightSpeed Venture Partners.

Karius pioneered the discovery and application of microbial cell-free DNA, enabling non-invasive detection of pathogens throughout the body with its Karius® Test. Today, the Karius Test is used in over 100 hospitals and health systems nationwide.

“This transformative round will allow Karius to help more patients faster, fuel the next wave of clinical studies, and accelerate technology innovation,” said Karius CEO, Mickey Kertesz. “We are humbled to be part of the team that delivered the first clinical applications of microbial cell-free DNA and are excited about what’s ahead for Karius.”

Microbes infecting different parts of the human body leave traces of their DNA in blood, known as microbial cell-free DNA (mcfDNA). The Karius Test uses novel genomics and AI approaches to identify and measure the mcfDNA of more than 1,000 clinically relevant pathogens (including bacteria, fungi, DNA viruses, and parasites) from a single blood draw, informing doctors about the likely types and quantities of infectious microorganisms affecting their patients. The Karius Test delivers results typically the day after sample receipt, allowing doctors to better diagnose and treat their patients.

“Infectious diseases are the second leading cause of deaths worldwide. Karius’ innovative mcfDNA technology accurately diagnoses infections that cannot be determined by other existing technologies,” said Deep Nishar, Senior Managing Partner at SoftBank Investment Advisers. “We are excited to support Karius and their mission to use genomic insights to fight infectious diseases and save lives.”

“Next-generation sequencing (NGS) has already transformed diagnostics through non-invasive prenatal testing and liquid biopsies for oncology,” said Chandra P. Leo, Investment Advisor at HBM Partners. “Karius is now applying the power of NGS of microbial cell-free DNA to the field of infectious disease diagnostics, helping physicians to non-invasively identify a broad range of pathogens in severely ill patients.”