

**MICROFABRICATED CAPILLARY ARRAY ELECTROPHORESIS ( $\mu$ CAE) STR PROFILING IN A FORENSIC LABORATORY**

**Susan A. Greenspoon<sup>1</sup>, Stephanie H.I. Yeung<sup>2</sup>, Kelly Johnson<sup>3</sup>, Han Na Rhee<sup>1</sup>, Jeffrey D. Ban<sup>1</sup>, Amy McGuckian<sup>4</sup>, Cecelia A. Crouse<sup>4</sup> and Richard A. Mathies<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*Virginia Department of Forensic Science, Richmond, VA 23219*

<sup>2</sup>*Department of Chemistry, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720*

<sup>3</sup>*Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA*

<sup>4</sup>*Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Crime Laboratory, 3228 Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach, FL 33406*

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The Berkeley Microfabricated Capillary Electrophoresis ( $\mu$ CAE) device has previously been reported to provide high quality STR profiling using both simulated and non-probative forensic samples (Yeung et al, 2006). As an extension of that work, a pre-commercial prototype instrument has been set up at the Virginia Department of Forensic Science (VDFS) for testing in a forensic laboratory. The first step in the process was for forensic DNA scientists to master the operation of the instrument. Upon completion of instrumentation set-up and a series of calibration and implementation runs, single source samples, amplified with PowerPlex<sup>®</sup> 16, have been successfully electrophoresed and analyzed. PowerPlex<sup>®</sup> 16 STR profiles obtained are being compared to the profiles obtained for the same amplified samples using the ABI 310 Genetic Analyzer for concordance evaluation. We also plan to test Profiler Plus<sup>®</sup> amplified DNA extracts. Experiments are underway to reproduce the work performed at the Mathies' laboratory at the University of California, Berkeley, which included mixture, sensitivity, database and non-probative sample analysis, but also to assess chip instrument performance using additional measures. Resolution measurements beyond those previously published are being performed and precision data are being collected. Experiments designed to assess whether any capillary cross-talk occurs among the 96 capillaries are being performed. Moreover, performance enhancement measures will be tested and pursued.

Successful operation of the  $\mu$ CAE demonstrates the capacity of this technology to be transported out of the research venue and into a practitioner forensic laboratory. Not only does this demonstrate the feasibility of the paradigm shift from large capillary systems to a microfluidic system capable of electrophoresing and capturing the STR data for 96 samples simultaneously in less than 30 minutes, it demonstrates that this technological advance can be mastered by the forensic scientist.

Yeung, S, Greenspoon, S, McGuckian, A, Crouse, C et al. Rapid and High-Throughput Forensic Short Tandem Repeat Typing Using a 96-Lane Microfabricated Capillary Array Electrophoresis Microdevice. *J Forensic Sci* 2006;51(4):740-747.