

Trends and Technology: Fall 2003

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 MARY JANE GORE

Trends and Technology welcomes releases and information about new products, services, Web sites, trends, and upcoming events (give us six months lead time for seminars and meetings). If your company has a Web site that you would like for us to review, please send us news for our Online section, or tell us about sites that would interest clinical laboratory scientists. These sites, as well as the new product information, are offered for reader information only. We cannot vouch for them and their presence here does not constitute an endorsement by *CLS* or ASCLS.

FDA APPROVALS

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved the first rapid assay screening test that physicians can use in their offices to help diagnose patients with bladder cancer. The FDA approved Matritech's NMP22® BladderChek™ test, which detects a bladder cancer nuclear matrix protein in urine of patients. Contact (617) 928-0820, ext. 248, or visit www.matritech.com.

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The Trends and Technology section seeks to publish product and technology information (including black-and-white glossy photographs), news items (such as FDA approvals), and information about laboratory resources of all kinds. The intent of this section is to provide a cutting-edge, one-stop shop tailored to the current practical needs and concerns of clinical laboratory practitioners. Let us hear from you with suggestions on how to improve this section. Direct inquiries and information to Mary Jane Gore, CLS Trends and Technology Editor, c/o ASCLS, 6701 Democracy Blvd., Suite 300, Bethesda, MD 20814, clstt@aol.com. Please send all materials clearly marked NEW PRODUCTS.

NEW PRODUCTS

Tecan US has announced a strategic alliance with GE Medical Systems for Tecan's front-end Genesis FE500 Workcell. Together, the two companies plan to enhance clinical diagnostics lab output using Tecan's state-of-the-art robotic equipment to enhance sample flow, coupled by world-class customer service by GE Medical Systems. As a modular, compact front-end automation workcell, the Genesis FE500 combines all pre-analytical functions including pre-sorting, centrifugation, volume check and clot detection, decapping, secondary tube labeling, aliquotting and destination sorting into analyzer racks from a variety of manufacturers. Contact GE Medical Systems Britt Zarleng, at (262) 544-3453.

Leica Microsystems introduces the new Leica IP C cassette and IP S slide printers for printing permanent, legible information directly onto most standard tissue cassettes and microscope slides used in histology cytology and biomedical research laboratories. Contact Molly Lundberg at (847) 405-7026.

Using a new patent-pending communications technology that bypasses traditional telephones—and their toll charges—a California staffing agency has reduced its search time to fill a job opening from an average of two hours to two minutes. Designers of the technology believe it offers time- and cost-saving efficiencies that are applicable to the personnel industry, and emergency services, education, and other industries. This technology, called One Call On Call, combines a variety of

existing communications formats into one system that renders the traditional telephone unnecessary and accelerates connectivity, says W Denis Nurmela, founder and chief executive officer of the corporation. For more information, contact Mr Nurmela at (866) 842-5150 or denis@onecalloncall.com.

The French biotech company GeneSystems has invented a very-high-speed technology for microbiological analysis, the GeneDisc Cyclor. This technology is based on a principle drawn from the field of molecular biology: real time PCR (polymerase chain reaction) and makes use of a consumable product, the GeneDisc. GeneSystems controls all stages in the development of the GeneDisc Cyclor, from design to marketing. For more information, contact Alicia Stanley at (312) 327-5260 or visit www.genesystems.fr.



GeneDisc cyclor

Thales Optem has introduced the Universal Digital Camera Coupler for connecting almost any digital camera featuring an accessible female thread to a wide range of optical microscopes. This economical and versatile camera coupler features a 37mm (M37 x 0.75) mounting thread and is compatible with a variety of step-down rings and adapters. This allows maximum versatility for quick and easy integration. Two key functional features stand out: a unique adjustment, which minimizes vignetting across the entire zoom range of the digital camera and the ability to both record the microscope's maximum image diameter at low zoom while also filling the camera's format as focal length increases. Contact marketing@thales-optem.com.

Bayer Diagnostics has announced worldwide availability of the Bayer serum HER-2/neu oncoprotein test on its leading automated immunoassay platform—the ADVIA Centaur® immunoassay system. The blood test measures circulating levels of the HER-2/neu oncoprotein to help oncologists treat patients with metastatic breast cancer. The test was cleared for use on the ADVIA Centaur system by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration earlier this year. Other recent additions to the Centaur system include four fully automated hepatitis B assays and a hepatitis C assay. Contact Amy Samaha at (914) 366-1815.

Roche Diagnostics has four new configurations available for its Integrated Modular ANALYTICS systems. All four combine clinical chemistry and immunoassay testing onto one platform to enhance efficiency and productivity. All can be used as a main line or specialty analyzer in a hospital or reference setting. For more about the optimal

work type and volume for each configuration, contact Lisa Davis at (800) 428-5074 or visit us.labsystems.roche.com.

ONLINE

This issue's pick of the Web is not a big juicy feast to dig into; think of it more as a coffee break read. But it is noteworthy that the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor has a Web page about "Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians" at <http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos096.htm>. Categories are all listed on the page in a continuous scroll down: nature of the work, working conditions, employment, training and advancement, job outlook, earnings, related occupations, and sources of additional information. It is a profession-at-a-glance site, but I imagine many readers would like to be able to compare salary ranges and median hourly pay by job category, and other facts about their chosen profession. Check out the professional and certification links, too, including a link to ASCLS: <http://www.ascls.org>.

STANDARDS

The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) has unveiled substantially revised accreditation standards that sharpen the focus on processes critical to achieving safe, high-quality care. These standards become effective January 1, 2004 for laboratories, hospitals, home care organizations, ambulatory care clinics, behavioral healthcare organizations, and long-term-care organizations. The 2004 standards are posted on the JCAHO website, www.jcaho.org, so organizations can access the standards prior to publication of the official accreditation manuals this fall. A 'crosswalk,' comparing the old standards with the new, is also available on the JCAHO web site.

INDUSTRY NEWS

To help address the labor crisis in the clinical laboratory industry, Jim Reid-Anderson, chairman, president and CEO of Dade Behring, announced the creation of a \$150,000 scholarship fund to be distributed over a three-year period. Fifty \$1,000 scholarships are to be distributed each year to individuals seeking associate degrees in medical laboratory science. The first scholarships will be awarded in 2004. The scholarship program will be administered by the Coordinating Council on the Clinical Laboratory Workforce (CCCLW), a group that represents all the clinical professional societies, and four federal agencies, including the FDA, the CDC, and the Veterans Administration. The CCCLW has agreed to develop the criteria for the scholarship application, promote the program on all of their Web sites and in newsletters, and create a judge's panel to select the winners. Expressing gratitude to Dade Behring, Jim Griffith, the convener of the CCCLW and Chancellor Professor and Chairperson; Department of Medical Laboratory Science at the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth, said, "It's a terrific start and we hope it will inspire others in the industry to follow suit". Contact Pattie Overstreet-Miller at (847) 267-5426 or James T Griffith PhD CLS (NCA) at (508) 999-8328.

According to Dow Jones Newswire, immunodiagnosics sales could double in five years for Roche Holding AG because of a late July \$1.4 billion deal to buy Igen International Inc. (IGEN), said Heino von Prondzynski, chief executive of Roche Diagnostics. Sales for Roche's immunodiagnosics business, Prondzynski said, could increase to \$900 million in five years from \$455 million now, or growth from the current 11% to more than 20% of the

\$6.2 billion immunodiagnostics market. The immunodiagnostics division makes tests that can detect thyroid problems, infertility, tumor markers, infectious disease, and cardiac markers. In an interview with Dow Jones, Prondzynski noted that the deal allows Igen to go forward as its own company with applications such as food testing and defense contracts which held no interest to Roche, while Roche gets full access to Igen's Origen technology, for which it had to pay royalties in the past.

Dade Behring, the largest company in the world solely devoted to clinical diagnostics, today released the findings of a benchmark survey on the diagnostic industry's reputation among U.S. consumers, healthcare professionals, and others. The intent of the summer 2003 survey was to develop further under-

standing of the expectations of consumers and healthcare and industry professionals, so that the industry could address their needs. Among findings, the survey indicated that half of the consumers interviewed (51 percent) consider that the diagnostics industry has a strong impact on the quality of their health care, and more than half (56%) consider that laboratory testing professionals have a "strong impact" on the quality of health care they receive. More than four out of five (84%) say that early-stage testing to assess one's risk of developing a disease is important.

Correlogic Systems, Inc., developer of promising new cancer detection tests that use just a single drop of blood from a patient, has entered into an agreement with Advion BioSciences, a leading provider of mass spectrometry services and

products, to explore the use of Advion's NanoMate™ System as a component of Correlogic's upcoming ovarian cancer clinical trials. Correlogic's test, called Proteome Pattern Blood TestSM, scans a drop of blood for protein patterns generated by a mass spectrometer. In February 2002, Correlogic Systems earned international recognition when its joint research with the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration revealed that the Correlogic test successfully detected all of the ovarian cancer patients in a study of 216 women, including cancers that were still in Stage 1. The goal of the Correlogic-Advion research is to determine whether results similar to those published in February 2002 can be replicated on the NanoMate system and employed in the NCI-sponsored clinical trials.

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