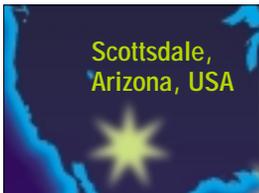


The Eighth International Symposium on Human Identification

By Randy Nagy
Promega Corporation
e-mail rnagy@promega.com



Promega would like to thank everyone who contributed to the success of *The Eighth International*

Symposium on Human Identification. This symposium has been held at the La Posada Resort in Scottsdale, Arizona, for the last six years; however, due to the popularity of the meeting it will be moved to a larger facility at Coronado Springs, Orlando, Florida, in 1998.

During the symposium, a total of 36 talks and 81 posters were presented. Fourteen exhibitors representing commercial companies that have a focus on DNA typing also took part in the meeting.

PRESENTATION OF DNA EVIDENCE

The program began with a session on the presentation of STR data in court. The first speaker, Dr. Charlotte Word (CellMark Diagnostics), gave a laboratory perspective on the presentation of this type of evidence at trial. Dr. Word's talk was followed by presentations by two prosecuting attorneys, Rockne Harmon and James Wooley. Rockne Harmon focused on why prosecutors prefer dealing with STR data while James Wooley presented litigation strategies for STRs, including the "K.I.S.S." principle (Keep it Short and Simple).

FORENSIC APPLICATIONS

During the next session, Dr. Ron Fournery (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) gave a talk entitled "DNA Typing - A Forensic Report Card in a Paradigm of Change". This presentation focused on evaluating progress in the field of DNA typing. This was followed by a talk given by Dr. Mechthild Prinz (Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, New York City) on the Forensic Application of Y Chromosome Specific STR Polymorphisms. During the last presentation of this session, Cindy Sprecher (Promega Corporation)

detailed the development of STR Multiplexes from Silver to Multicolor Fluorescent Systems.

AUTOMATED SYSTEMS

During the third session of talks, Dr. Robert Bever (The Bode Technology Group, Inc.), Don Kessler (Genomix Corporation) and Dr. Shiela Colby (Hitachi Software Engineering Co.) discussed various automated systems for STR analysis, and Dr. Kevin Sullivan (Forensic Science Service) gave the U.K. perspective on automated analysis of databank samples. The final presentation of the first day was given by Dr. Arthur Eisenberg (University of North Texas Health Science Center) who discussed automated DNA isolation using FTA™ paper.

DNA DATABANKING

On the the second day of the symposium. Dr. Bruce Budowle (FBI) presented a "World-wide Study of PCR Based Markers". In the next talk, Dr. Dennis Reeder (National Institute of Standards and Technology) introduced STRBase, a useful web site containing extensive STR reference information (<http://ibm4.carb.nist.gov:8800/dna/home.htm>). This was followed by a CODIS update by Steve Niezgodna (FBI). DNA databanking methods and issues were covered in presentations given by Dr. Berch Henry (Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences), Dr. George Riley (GeneLex Corporation), Rachael Frazier (Forensic Science Service) and Dr. Paul Ferrara (Virginia Division of Forensic Science). The common message regarding databanking was that STRs currently provide the best method for automated analysis of large numbers of samples. In the last presentation of this session, Dr. Tamyra Moretti (FBI) summarized data collected for the National STR Validation Study for Human Identification and CODIS.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES

New information on current technologies was presented by Susie Del Rio (University of

Minnesota), Dr. Victoria Singer (Molecular Probes, Inc.), Dr. James Schumm (Promega Corporation), and Dr. Cydne Holt and Dr. Katherine Lazuruk (PE Applied Biosystems). The topics covered included FTA™ cards, fluorescent dyes, and STR megaplexes. There were two talks presenting statistical issues. These were given by Dr. Bruce Weir (North Carolina State University) and Dr. George Carmody (Carleton University).

New technologies were highlighted on the last day of the symposium. Dr. Philip Ross (Armed Forces Institute of Pathology) and Dr. John Butler (GeneTrace Systems) gave presentations on Mass Spectrometry. Dr. Nigel Watson (University of Strathclyde) spoke on Surface Enhanced Resonance Raman Scattering. Dr. John Planz (GeneScreen, Inc.) gave a presentation on Genetic Bit Analysis and Christian Gehrig (University of Bern) spoke on the evaluation of Prostate-Specific Antigen Membrane Tests. Microchip technologies for STR analysis were presented by Dr. Dan Ehrlich (Whitehead Institute of Bio-medical Research) and Dr. Ronald Sosnowski (Nanogen, Inc.). The final session featured talks discussing mitochondrial DNA analysis by Molly Morgan (Armed Forces Institute of Pathology), Mark Wilson (FBI) and Tomasz Grzybowski (The Ludwik Rydygier's School of Medical Sciences).

Everyone enjoyed the great lunches provided and the Lagoon Pool Party on Friday night. There was plenty of time during the welcome reception, poster sessions, lunches and breaks for the 500 attendees to talk with each other and catch up with the news from around the world. Many attendees took advantage of the hot tubs and swimming pool, and made one last climb up Camelback Mountain. The La Posada Resort in Scottsdale has been a fantastic facility in which to hold this meeting; however, it is the people attending who really make this meeting a success. I look forward to seeing everyone again in Orlando in 1998.

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