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AIMS QLD Branch Committee Members 2021

Chair: Indu Singh

Vice-Chair: Anne-Marie Christensen

Treasurer: Patricia (Trish) Laube & Avinash Kundur

Secretary: Patricia (Trish) Laube & Avinash Kundur

Committee Member: Ali Baradaran

Committee Member: Rebecca Donkin

Committee Member: Allan Hicks

Committee Member: Jacqueline DeWirral

Committee Member: Kieren Cheng

Committee Member: Deborah Orr (PaLs)

Student Members: Caitlin Devonport & Jacob Thamm (QUT)

Arthur Forrest & Andre Jones-Dorr (Griffith)

For all branch enquiries, please contact queenslandaims@gmail.com

AIMS QLD Branch Chair's Report Dec 2021

Welcome to the Queensland Analyser December 2021. Another year has gone by though COVID is still with us in its mutated varying forms challenging public and health care workers with highest workload for us the pathology workforce. With borders opening again, hopefully all the hardworking scientists, technicians and other pathology hidden work force can get some time to enjoy with their families and friends.

Over last year we have had a few changes to AIMS Queensland Branch committee with a new member Mr Kieren Cheng joining the team. The committee would also like to thank 2 student representative of the committee, Ms Melinda McConnel from QUT and Mr Arthur Forrest from Griffith University. They have been very valuable members contributing to multiple events and the newsletters. We wish them all the best in their next phase of work life. Happy to welcome Mr Jacob Thamm our new QUT student representative and Mr Eshwin Rangesh the Griffith university student representative.

Since last newsletter in Aug 2021, we continued to host regular annual events. First one being AIMS-HGQ (Histotechnology Group of Queensland) joint meeting online via zoom with a theme of 'HEART' on 19th Aug 2021. We extend our thanks to HGQ president, AIMS office, Queensland State Branch committee members and all the attendees from far and wide for their continuing support. This was followed by a few face-to-face meetings, which were welcomed by all. On 12th Oct 2021 we enjoyed joint AIMS-AACB (Australasia Association of Clinical Biochemists) scientific meeting with a theme of 'BURNS' held on Griffith University Southbank campus in Brisbane. Finally, we finished the year with another scientific meeting, AIMS-PaLS (Preanalytical & Laboratory Staff) networking event on 18th Nov 2021 at Pineapple Hotel Kangaroo Point, where 2 speakers presented their expertise about Cold Agglutinins and Short Synacthen Stimulation testing. You will find more information about these meetings in this final newsletter for 2021.

Please save the dates 16th and 17th July 2022 for the AIMS Queensland State and PaLS meeting to be held at Gold Coast campus of Griffith University. The Theme will be "Biomarkers of the Diseases". More details will be available in early 2022.

In one of the regular features of this newsletter "5 minutes with" I will share with you my thoughts as a practising scientists and academic trainer of scientists, I have been AIMS member for more than 25 years and am currently, chairperson of the AIMS Queensland Branch. We also thank Mr Christopher Agius for sharing his journey after graduation through regional laboratories of Pathology Queensland over many years.

Wishing everyone an enjoyable safe and happy holiday season. Hoping 2022 will be less challenging. Hope to see you all in July 2022 on Gold Coast and at other events to follow in 2022. In the meantime, stay safe. Merry Christmas & a very Happy New Year to you all, your families, and friends.

Indu Singh
i.singh@griffith.edu.au

Recent Events

AIMS/HGQ scientific meeting on Zoom

Written by Avinash Kundur

The annual AIMS/ HGQ joint scientific meeting held on 19th August 2021 via Zoom. Although the event was initially planned to be conducted at the Pineapple Hotel, Brisbane, due to development in COVID-19 cases, the event was moved to an online platform. It was great evening with more than 40 registrants attending the event. The theme for the 2021 AIMS/HGQ joint meeting was “Heart”. A big thank-you to our three presenters who gave great presentations and insight into the topic.

The first speaker of the evening was Dr. Antony McNamee, Research Fellow from the BioRheology Research Laboratory, Griffith University. Dr McNamee presented his topic “Beating the problem with Artificial Hearts” in which he has discussed the current issues such as increased shear stress and thrombosis that exist with artificial hearts, the mechanisms behind it and how his laboratory is trying to solve some of these issues that may be associated with artificial hearts. The second speaker for the evening was Rebekah Goodrich, Assistant Director of Queensland Tissues Bank (QTB), who has presented her topic “Donation and production at QTB”. In this talk the speaker has presented various procedures that are associated with the collection and processing of heart tissue at the QTB. The final speaker for the evening was Dr Luke Vasanthakumar, AP registrar, Mater Hospital, who has presented on the topic “Ventricular Septal Defects”. In his talk Dr Vasanthakumar has talked about the causes and various types of ventricular septal defects.

Members of AIMS and HGQ would like to thank all the speakers of the evening for taking time out of their busy schedule and giving a talk to the attendees. The organizing committee would also like to thank all the scientists and technicians who attend the joint meeting.

**AIMS Queensland State Branch
&
Australasian Association of Clinical Biochemists**

**Scientific Meeting
Theme “BURNS”**

Written by Caitlin Devonport



Associate Professor Leila



Dr Bronwyn Griffin

The annual AIMS Queensland State Branch and AACB Combined Scientific Meetings was held on 12th October 2021 at Griffith University Southbank Brisbane Campus. This year’s topic “Burns” was presented by the head of the Queensland University of Technology Burns and Trauma Laboratory at the Centre for Children’s Health Research in Brisbane Associate Professor Leila Cuttle, and Senior Research Fellow Dr Bronwyn Griffin from Griffith University. They highlighted the need for rapid and appropriate medical attention for children with burns to ensure optimal patient outcomes and explained a model for identifying proteins in burn wound fluid to predict burn wound healing.

After more than a year lacking face to face meetings, a room packed with attendees caught up over food and drinks and networked with scientists from the Mater, SNP, Pathology Queensland, and QML. A big thank you to the wonderful presenters and sponsor Abacus dx, in addition to AACB QLD branch chair Steven Weir and colleagues for organising the event.



**AIMS Queensland State Branch
&
Preatalytical & Laboratory Staff (PaLS)**

**Networking event
Topics: Understanding Cold Agglutinins & Explaining Short Synacthen
Stimulation testing**

Written by Caitlin Devonport

The Pineapple Hotel held the AIMS QLD branch and Preatalytical & Laboratory Staff (PaLS) on the 18th of November 2021 for an enjoyable and informative evening with presentations from two experts. With the theme aimed at providing information for both scientists and pathology collectors, there was a unique combination of disease background, collection, and what occurs in the laboratory. Dr Elzahn de Waal, the chemical pathologist from Pathology Queensland presented the protocol for Short synacthen stimulation testing as the investigation for suspected primary or secondary adrenocortical insufficiency, her topic was well received with an interesting discussion afterwards. Our other speaker, Ms Robyn Wells, Advanced Scientist of Haematology, spoke about the importance of blood collection and transport from patients with Cold agglutinins, providing images of blood smears of when collection is done incorrectly and correctly, and provided some interesting cases she has come across. Overall, it was a great networking night with attendees including current medical science students, new graduates, and experienced scientists. We look forward to having another successful evening in 2022! This evening was sponsored by BD Biosciences.



Griffith University Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science Graduation and Annual Networking Cruise

By Arthur Forrest
Photographs by Andre Jones-Dorr

On the 10th of December the Griffith Medical Laboratory Science staff, alumni and students celebrated their annual networking boat cruise on the picturesque Coral Sea. After weeks of heavy rain, we were finally met with sunny weather. The evening was great with fantastic food, three massive cakes and wonderful company. After a few years of the annual networking cruise being on hiatus, we are back on track due to the hard work of the organising committee.

The Griffith Medical Laboratory Science community took this opportunity to wish Indu Singh all the best with her retirement from course convener of Griffith Medical Laboratory Science, and thank her for all the work, love and support she has poured into the degree since she founded it in 2011. We also welcomed Dr Allan Hicks to the position of Program Director of the Medical Laboratory Science degree and Dr Avinash Kundur as Program Advisor.

During our cruise, academic achievement awards were given out to our high achieving graduates of 2021. The Dux of the 2021 graduating year is Alyce Topping, who also took home the subject prize for Haematology. Ronikaa Gupta received the most subject prizes, taking home awards for highest grades in Transfusion Science, Histopathology, Clinical Microbiology and Molecular Diagnostics. We are very proud of all our graduates and those who won awards for their hard work.

The night was lovely, and everyone had a fantastic time. It will be hard to beat in 2022 but I am sure, as always that the Griffith Medical Laboratory Science staff, alumni and students are more than up to the task.



Ronikaa Gupta – Academic Excellence Certificate for High Program GPA and Subject Prizes for Clinical Microbiology, Histopathology, Molecular Diagnostics and Transfusion Science



Aya Okamoto – Academic Excellence Certificate for High Program GPA



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Arsalana Corpuz – Subject Prize for Clinical Laboratory Discipline Research Project



Arthur Forrest – Academic Excellence Certificate for High Program GPA and Subject Prize for Clinical Placements 1 and 2

Academic Achievement Certificates for High GPA

1. Alyce Topping - DUX
2. Ronikaa Gupta
3. Arthur Forrest
4. Courtney Liehm
5. Aya Okamoto
6. Lilian Macfarlane

Subject Prizes

Clinical Microbiology - 3006MSC
Histopathology - 3008MSC
Haematology - 3009MSC
Transfusion Science - 3011MSC
Clinical Biochemistry - 3012MSC
Molecular Diagnostics - 3020MSC
Clinical Placement - 4001MSC & 4002MSC
Clinical Laboratory Discipline Research Project - 4004MSC

Ronikaa Gupta
 Ronikaa Gupta
 Alyce Topping
 Ronikaa Gupta
 Courtney Liehm
 Ronikaa Gupta
 Arthur Forrest

Arsalana Corpuz



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Pursuing Personal Passions in the Regions

A personal reflection of a new scientist in the field. - Written by Christopher Agius

Foreword: This is an opinion piece that only reflects the views and opinions of the writer. It does not reflect the views of any organization, group, or political party; past or present.

It's tough to believe it has already been 5 years since I accepted a Graduate Scientist position in the public service right out of university. It has been such a wild ride in which I have already seen so many different laboratories, communities, and ways of practicing I never thought while going through university I'd ever have the courage to try. Sometimes when presented with opportunities, you can't live with the "what if?" - a piece of advice I got from my father early on was "say you can do it and figure the rest out later". Probably not advice you can blankly apply to the world of health care in retrospect, but sometimes you can't live with self-doubt; sometimes you must believe in yourself and believe you can rise to the occasion. Through my short time navigating the public system, I've also encountered unique challenges I never thought I'd have to consider as part of my professional life; not to mention the massively changed world we all find ourselves in post-2020. Through this short piece, I'd like to take you through some of my professional experiences, what I've learned, what I struggled/am struggling with and why I still believe the public (and indeed the world) needs passionate scientists even if they don't know they do.

While going through university, a common thought I'd have was "I'll get into a lab close by and that will be my life". That illusion was shattered immediately when I was offered a 2016 graduate position in a regional laboratory 2 hours away from where I lived. For a fresh graduate who at the time had never lived out of home this prospect was daunting, however I wasn't about to turn down an opportunity to get straight into the workforce right out of university. People who are attracted to this profession are, on average, more introverted than some other disciplines - and I fall into that category so you can imagine my trepidation moving to a town I'd scarcely heard of to meet a bunch of new people. Even before stepping into my new life, I had my work causing me to get out of my comfort zone and step out into the real world.

To spoil the ending, I am back at that very same lab today and have built a house in that very same regional town. Sometimes when you get out of your comfort zone, you may find a better one. I learned very quickly that I appreciated the balance between city and country a lot more than I realised, and I learned that there are opportunities you'll have afforded to you out in the regional settings that you may not get in urban centres.

One of the final parts of my graduateship was a rural rotation to the very centre of Queensland. I'd never heard of Longreach before I went there and honestly that kind of rural area was what I was expecting when I left the Gold Coast to anywhere. I learned the very next day after my arrival was a full NATA technical assessment when it was expected initially to be a chemistry surveillance audit. This was my first real opportunity to experience quality management hands on and this was where I also found I had a knack for identification and rectification of quality issues - or for a simpler term, auditing.

After leaving the graduate program I joined the country relievers, a team that sends in additional personnel to laboratories that require additional cover (normally rural laboratories so the staff members there can take leave). This allowed me the chance to see so many different labs and different ways of doing things - which greatly varied my marketable skill set. Some

labs needed me to perform on-call work, some labs required me to be able to read stat micro, some labs asked me as an outsider to perform a review of certain parts of their lab to see if there was anything they had overlooked in their own internal review. There was just so much on offer to learn if you engaged with it, and then being able to take certain things from one lab and introduce it to another so that everyone benefits - at the time I didn't realise it, but I was already engaging with quality management before I really took it as a point of interest.

If you had asked me at university whether I'd be interested in auditing and quality services I'd have looked at you very strangely. On its surface it's a bunch of paperwork and busywork or at its most negative it's just a system designed to punish people; but really that's just the negative stigma around what it is in place for. As I have found out through my few years of being more engaged with it, quality systems and quality initiatives are vast and varied. They can include simply ensuring a documented process is followed, but they can also include efficiency improvement projects or implementation of risk minimizing strategies. Quality at its core is about improvement, not maintaining a level of service you already offer (though that does form part of it! I don't think I would have had the opportunity to really try this out if I had just landed in an urban lab.

After relieving I did end up back in the laboratory, I did my graduateship in. I was eager to keep assisting with process improvement and a couple of years later I had another opportunity - Due to my recency being a reliever and my eye for detail I was asked if I wanted to relieve a rural lab in the supervisory position. Having only really been out of university for around 2-3 years at this point the prospect seemed daunting but again these opportunities don't show up every so often - and it was only temporary, what's the worst that could happen? In my time there I was able to use my quality skills to make a few things easier for the staff members there and streamline and digitize some paperwork to reduce our carbon footprint.

There is a limit to how much one can do in the public sector however, even within the rules of standards. If you notice a process that can be improved, you have a potential quality initiative - but sometimes it can be frustrating when you have a passion to improve but there are other external factors that prevent you even exploring these concepts (outside of also having your regular science work you need to do!). So now I was learning not only how to lead a pathology team, but also how to navigate an increasingly complicated approvals landscape and getting a deeper understanding of the whole health care system.

One of the most rewarding things I've done so far in the quality space was leading a project which revolutionised our laboratory group's phlebotomy teams, increasing their efficiency 5-fold by researching, triaging, implementing, and troubleshooting a fleet of ID scanners and printers for everyone in our 5 laboratories. Everyone's lives were made easier for it (less handwriting!) and it was something that was already in use at bigger sites, but I adapted it for our regional model and now, over a year on, they can't live without it!

Something else I noticed in our recent recruitments that have come to us from urban areas (with more people in each lab compared to ours) is that due to the size of these laboratories, there is less room to experiment in different departments or learn complex troubleshooting techniques. As the bigger labs need to be constantly punching through samples 24/7, there's much less of a propensity for senior scientists to allow more junior staff attempts at troubleshooting assays or instrumentation at large as every minute of downtime is less productivity that backs up and up as more work comes in. In addition, the more central you are, the more likely it is that it is easier to call for engineering support from a vendor rather than attempt to locate and rectify the issue yourself. I can tell you from experience that if you

are, the more likely it is that it is easier to call for engineering support from a vendor rather than attempt to locate and rectify the issue yourself. I can tell you from experience that if you have a belt issue in your machine while in the middle of the desert far out west in your Roma's and Charleville's, an engineer can't just show up on your door within the hour. It's a flight for them, and these flights may only happen once or twice a week. These situations require a bit of trial and error, sometimes some guidance over the phone but a lot more hands on which gave me both basic engineering knowledge of how my analysers functioned and a deeper knowledge of each assay - which then assisted me in future when trying to troubleshoot assays that aren't functioning making me a better all-around scientist.

I, recently, have fallen into this trap also of needing to get the assay online due to having no redundancy and having a constantly expanding emergency department. We have newer scientists in the back of my mind. I'd love to explain my thought process and how I got from A to B - but even now in my more regional area the pressures are becoming higher and higher, and we're constantly being asked to do more with less. My regional site has had 3 emergency expansions and 3 more wards added in the few years I have been here - while the laboratory falls further and further behind. It's leading to increasing burnout of scientists, and a struggle to simply get the work done - which in turn has more or less disallowed time to put towards other extra-curricular laboratory improvement processes such as my assisting with quality. It has been tough to maintain a level of drive for science that I can be proud of when I'm passionate about a certain field, but our work has a real tangible impact on people's lives - whether you're in chemistry or transfusion. When I started to get burned out, that's the tenant that I came back to.

The pandemic has assisted in putting pathology services more into the public eye. Prior to this, a lot of support services really didn't get the headlines or public support they needed - as the public really didn't know you existed. A recent survey showed a non-insignificant portion of respondents stating they believed their tests were performed by their doctor. It's much easier to make a headline about more doctors and nurses than it is for radiographers and scientists. I work with some fantastic people that really care about me as a person and I don't think I would have made it through this year without them. Sometimes it seems like a thankless job but without us healthcare grinds to a halt; we are needed even if the public doesn't know it. Sometimes it can feel like we're not getting the resources we need especially in the regions - which is why when opportunities in those regions come up, I always encourage people to think about them seriously. You'll never know what you'll find out about yourself, what other opportunities that may lead to, or what other passions you'll discover about science!

In the end, we all want to be pursuing what we're passionate about. Though sometimes finding out what that is can be a surprise. Sometimes all it takes is someone or some situation to get you out there to experience something you wouldn't have done on your own.

5 minutes with Indu Singh

1. Where do you work?

I currently work at Griffith University as the program Director of Medical Laboratory Science program that I started in 2011.

2. What do you like best about being a medical scientist?

Having worked on bench in pathology laboratories as well as in academic teaching and research role, I have enjoyed various aspects of being medical scientist for more than 40 years and what I have loved most through this time is that every single day brings new challenges, and no day is same as before even though we may be performing same tests and using same analyzers or teaching same courses year in year out, but every day brings a new experience and keeps the passion going. The interaction with colleagues, students, and researchers to discuss interesting cases and learn something new each time is my motivation to come back to work as a medical scientist each day.

3. Do you believe that there will be any lasting changes to the Pathology industry in the post Covid-19 world?

I am pretty sure there will be lasting changes post COVID-19 world (if there is any POST, as it seems like this is going to stay around as part of environment just like Flu). Pathology industry has always been fluid and ever changing with increasing mixed race global population and varying demographics.

PCR testing for coronavirus is another step towards future individualized molecular diagnosis which may become mainstream diagnostic platform. Increased automation in laboratories was appreciated a lot more during the pandemic. This trend will continue for the clinical laboratory allowing where more advanced technologies requiring less frequent human intervention, while also enhancing data quality with greater reproducibility. This will allow scientists to focus on more value-add activities such as interpreting patient results, developing innovative clinical lab tests and performing life-saving research.

Besides that, increased workload in pathology due to COVID-19 testing means delayed diagnosis for some critical or chronic conditions such as cancers screening program and delayed elective surgeries will see increased workload due to COVID continuing post COVID to catchup on backlog that may impact staffing levels and working hours. Pathologist may need to continue working remotely with digital pathology allowing the workflow to run as smoothly as possible with the changing environment.

4. What future development/s direction/s in the industry are you excited about?

Multidisciplinary collaboration between industry and academic teaching to train future laboratory Medicine professionals in a standardised manner. Use of technology particularly in managing data interpretation with artificial intelligence but full human overview at point of release of results and point of care testing with proper training and competent laboratory workforce.

5. If you could choose to have any superpower, what would it be and how would you use it?

Only if I was superwoman who could influence the environment and raise the awareness of what we humble laboratory scientists, technicians and professionals do behind the scenes to allow doctors make their mighty diagnostic decisions.

How will I know I have achieved it or used it when I will stop hearing people say the nurses and pathologists perform my laboratory tests.....



AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE
OF MEDICAL SCIENTISTS

SAVE THE DATE

AIMS QUEENSLAND STATE MEETING

Come along and Join with you Industry colleagues for
interesting discussions and complimentary catering

16th & 17th July 2022
Griffith University
Gold Coast Campus

Topic: Biomarkers of Disease

For Updates please visit:

<https://www.aims.org.au/qld>



The **APACE (Australasian Professional Acknowledgement of Continuing Education)** scheme is a voluntary programme that recognises continuing education, formal courses and a wide range of professional activities which contribute to your professional growth.

The healthcare industry is undergoing rapid change. We are expected to keep our knowledge and skills up to date to enable us to perform to the highest professional standard. The **APACE** scheme provides a method by which your professional activities are recognised.

APACE has been approved by the **New Zealand Medical Laboratory Science Board** as a re-certification programme for **New Zealand Medical Laboratory Scientists**.

APACE has been approved by the **Royal College of Pathologists Australia (RCPA)** as a continuing professional development recognition programme for Fellows of the Faculty of Science.

Why should I join the APACE Scheme?

APACE credit points can be claimed for all approved continuing education participated in over a 2-year period. It is simple and easy to do. Collect an attendance certificate or alternatively all AIMS run activities have an attendance sheet which is sent to head office as a record. A wide range of activities will contribute to points, ranging from employment to serving on professional committees.

What are the benefits of being APACE accredited?

- APACE provides formal recognition of activities that may have been pursued without recognition elsewhere- contributes to a professional development portfolio.
- Apace certificate looks great in a Resume.
- Encourages individuals to maintain, improve and extend their knowledge and skills.
- CPD is about keeping up with current and new developments and practices.
- Encouraging staff participation ensures a competent workforce and enhanced service quality and reliability.
- CPD demonstrates personal commitment to ongoing continuing education and professional development to current and future employers.
- Knowledge gained through CPD may enable individuals to reframe complex problems and gain new insights.

How do I start collecting Points?

- APACE is open to and included in your membership fee for all AIMS members, and also open to AACB, ASM, ASTH, ANZSBT, and FSA (SIRT) for a small fee.
- The Activity Credit guide is located online, Login to the AIMS website and go to the members area to check for included activities and points values.
- Keep a record of all activities completed, including dates and a description of the activity.
- Activities are conveniently logged online, no need for hard copies.
- An APACE Certificate is issued when you notify head office that you have accrued 100CEU in a 2-year period.
- Limits on types of activities have been temporarily removed, in recognition of the difficulties in accessing activities during the pandemic. Limits will be reestablished when things return to normal.
- Then you are well on your way to your APACE Certificate! 😊

For more information and to enrol visit <http://www.aims.org.au/apace>

Note on Student Membership Application Forms

The one-page form is currently for full-time students only and has to be signed or emailed from institutional email address by the Course Coordinator or an officer of the university. The two-page form is for all other applicants. Both forms are available at <http://www.aims.org.au/membershipinformation/join>



Letter from APACE Committee to all Members

Dear Member,

At the last APACE Committee meeting the current situation in regard to the limited opportunities for CPD due to covid-19 restrictions was discussed. The borders have been closed and most international, national, state and SIG scientific meetings and workshops have been cancelled for 2020. Due to social distancing and staff working in isolated teams, many work places have cancelled Grand Rounds, film clubs, journal clubs and lunchtime educational sessions. For most members, being able to accrue the required 100 points in two years to gain APACE certification or re-certification has become very challenging, if not impossible.

Therefore, the APACE Committee has decided to extend the time frame to three years. Also, the limits for on-line learning, webinars, structured and journal reading will be removed. These changes will remain in place until CPD activities return to normal across the country.

A list of sites that provide on-line learning is available on the AIMS website. Any member who has undertaken on-line learning at other websites please do not hesitate to contact the AIMS National Office with details, so these can be added to the list.

The Committee is also undertaking a review of APACE activities and the credits assigned to each activity. Details of the changes will be announced when the review is completed. If any member would like to provide feedback or comments regarding this review, they can be forwarded to AIMS National Office.

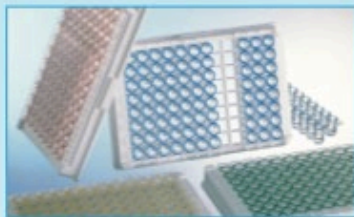
Maureen Jacobsen MAIMS
Chair APACE committee

24 June 2020

The Power of Research



Microscopic Analysis



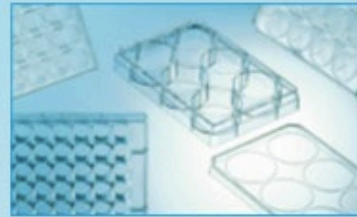
ELISA / Immunology



Fluorescence / Luminescence



3D Cell Culture



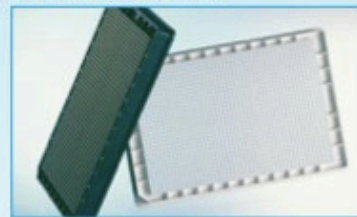
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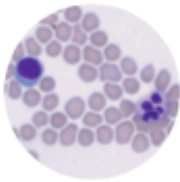
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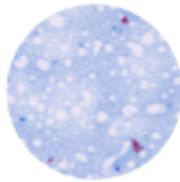


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Hematology



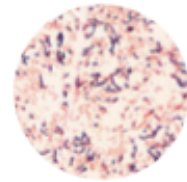
TB



Cytology



Gram



Advantages for Labs

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- ◆ Equipped with staining and cytocentrifugation capabilities
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