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Press Release

BLUEGNOME ANNOUNCES AVAILABILITY OF CYTOCHIP™ FOR CLINICAL DIAGNOSTIC APPLICATIONS

BlueGnome, a leading provider of microarray solutions, has launched the CytoChip™ - a DNA microarray which can be used to improve the clinical diagnosis of genetic abnormalities.

Currently, patients presenting with a clinically significant genetic condition, such as Down's syndrome, have their DNA tested by karyotyping, a low resolution technique where a patient's chromosomes are visually checked for large abnormalities through a microscope. A clinical geneticist may then make a diagnosis immediately or, where the resolution of karyotyping is insufficient, additionally order a small number of higher resolution FISH (fluorescent insitu hybridization) tests to "probe" whether specific parts of the patient's genomic sequence are abnormal.

The CytoChip™ represents a major step forward by allowing thousands of such sequence dependent probes to be tested in parallel using an experimental technique known as arrayCGH, thereby enabling a high resolution screen of all chromosomes to be completed in a single, cost effective experiment.

Nabeel Affara, Professor of Molecular Genetics at the University of Cambridge and a leader in the microarray field, explained, 'ArrayCGH experimentation was developed for research purposes using sequence specific probes known as BACs (bacterial artificial chromosomes) spaced at one megabase intervals along the genome. In designing the CytoChip™ BlueGnome has taken this 1MB backbone and added additional BACs at regions known to be involved in the major human genetic disorders. The result is an array with significantly improved diagnostic characteristics.'

Manufacturing of the CytoChip™ will be undertaken in collaboration with scientists formerly at BioRobotics, the Cambridge based developers of the world's first commercial microarray robot. The BACs used on the CytoChip™ have been made available in the UK and Europe under an exclusive commercial license from the Roswell Park Cancer Institute in the United States.

BlueGnome's arrayCGH analysis software, BlueFuse, is the emerging standard for the analysis of arrayCGH experiments. The CytoChip™ is seen as a logical extension to BlueGnome's offering in this area. Nick Haan, CEO of BlueGnome concluded, 'Considered alone, the CytoChip™ is a real innovation, providing superior quality and diagnostic power. The true potential of the technology for clinical applications is, however, revealed when the CytoChip™ is combined with our leading software for automated and reproducible arrayCGH analysis, BlueFuse for Microarrays.'

In addition to use in clinical cytogenetics the CytoChip™ may also be used for chromatin immunoprecipitation experiments and to investigate gene presence and function between species.

The CytoChip™ is available for immediate order within Europe. For further information write to info@cambridgebluegnome.com.

Cambridge, 14th February 2006