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U.S. Army Validates BIOCHECK® As An Effective First Line Test For Suspicious Powders

Review of tools to detect biological threats published by U.S. Army ECBC in December 2009 edition of The Journal of Hazardous Materials, 20/20 BioCheck® was found to easily and accurately determine the presence of a potential biological threat and differentiate between toxic and harmless hoax powders.

Rockville, MD. - December 3, 2009 – The U.S. Army's Edgewood Chemical Biological Center (ECBC), based in Aberdeen Maryland recently released results of its study *An evaluation of suspicious powder screening tools for first responders*, in the **Journal of Hazardous Materials**, December (2009). In its report, the authors evaluated several commercially available products used for field screening of potential biological- agents in powder form. One product tested was BioCheck®, manufactured by 20/20 BioResponse, a division of 20/20 GeneSystems, in Rockville Maryland.

In 2001, letters containing anthrax spores were sent to offices in Florida, New York and Washington DC. Since then, hundreds of copycat letters have been sent to federal and state offices, businesses, universities, embassies and news agencies. In these letters, powders were enclosed along with threats made to the recipient. In many cases, authorities were required to shut down these facilities, disrupting operations and evacuating large numbers of persons until it was determined that the unidentified powder was not dangerous.

In the report, the ECBC scientists expressed the need for first responders to have “a rapid and reliable method to rule out hoax powder incidents in order to quickly restore commerce and ease safety concerns.” In their effort to evaluate commercially available products, the ECBC team sought out products that “would allow first responders to quickly ascertain if a suspicious powder poses a potential threat necessitating additional testing for biological pathogens...”

In the study, the authors evaluated several products, including BioCheck® to determine their effectiveness at identifying threats from some of the most lethal biological agents including *Bacillus anthracis* (anthrax), *Yersinia pestis* and ricin. The quantities tested were reduced to minute amounts to determine each product's level of detection. Following these tests they rated BioCheck®'s performance “extremely positive”, their highest rating, at identifying each of the three pathogens. In their comments, the authors found the product to be effective and highly sensitive in differentiating between the actual biological threats and other hoax powders.

In their conclusions, when describing BioCheck®, the authors wrote “The kit was easy to use with clear instructions and did not require additional instrumentation. Five

minutes required to perform the assay is considered short for field detection kits and all types of biological agents used in this assessment were detectable.”

BioCheck® is a patented product produced by 20/20 BioResponse for the detection of biological hazards. It is produced in Rockville, MD in 20/20's own facility. On the market since 2003, it is used by hundreds of public safety and first responder agencies throughout the US and internationally.

Developed after the anthrax attacks in 2001, BioCheck has been used in live incidents where bioterror substances were present. In describing using the BioCheck products, the authors wrote “the kit was easy to use with clear instructions and did not require additional instrumentation. Five minutes required to perform the assay is considered short for field detection kits and all types of biological agents used in this assessment were detected.”

For additional information on the study contact Elsevier Publications at www.elsevier.com/locate/jhazmat. Refer to: C. Poore, et al., An evaluation of suspicious powder screening tools for first responders, J. Hazard. Mater. (2009) doi:110.1016/j.hazmat.2009.05.142

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About 20/20 BioResponse:

www.biocheckinfo.com

Based in Rockville Maryland, 20/20 BioResponse, a division of 20/20 GeneSystems, Inc. manufactures products for the BioDefense and Homeland Security markets. It has won numerous government grants for the development of biological security products.

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