
Beckman Coulter Expands Innovative Solutions for the Monitoring of HIV and AIDS in Africa



Beckman Coulter Life Sciences has announced an expansion of its CARES (Cellular Accessible Retroviral Evaluation Systems) Initiative at the 2015 International AIDS Society (IAS) Conference, being held at the Vancouver Convention Centre from July 19-22, 2015 in Vancouver, Canada. CARES focuses on providing innovative solutions for the monitoring of HIV and AIDS treatment in Africa.

The CARES Initiative in Africa started in 2004 after Professor Debbie Glencross, a South African laboratory pathologist, found a different and less expensive way to measure a patient's CD4 count. A person's CD4 cell count must be 500 cells or less to qualify for antiretroviral treatment through the country's national program.

Beckman Coulter's latest initiative expands on her work by addressing the increasing demand in Africa for CD4 monitoring. The company has developed a compact flow cytometry analyzer, the [AQUIOS CL Flow Cytometer](#), which can be used nearer to the patient* to run the assay Prof Glencross developed, but still within a laboratory environment - with protocols for standardization and assay quality as required by the country's National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS). However, the high precision 'LOAD & GO' Aquios can be used in smaller laboratories and operated by minimally trained users**. Previously, blood samples have had to travel for several days to reach the flow cytometry centre.

Dr. Jeannine T. Holden, Beckman Coulter's Director of Scientific Affairs explained: "For the first time, a compact, laboratory instrument is available that offers high quality, fully automated CD4 counts. The rapid turnaround time and ease of use mean that doctors and patients can get results in well under an hour, and timely treatment decisions can be made."

Prof Glencross is Director and Principle Pathologist in the Flow Cytometry unit of the Department of Haematology at the Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital, South Africa. The PLG (Pan-Leukocyte Gating) technique which she developed simplifies conventional flow cytometry techniques. Her test, which is easy to quality control and teach to minimally trained operators**, has been patented by the NHLS.

Talking about the increasing demand for CD4 monitoring, she added: "We are working to empower smaller community laboratories so that they can extend the availability of PLG *** to meet demand while still meeting the requirements of the National Health Laboratory Service. This will enable best clinical and laboratory practice while reducing the time it takes to deliver the result."

Once samples are loaded, the [Aquios CL Flow Cytometer](#) automatically carries out mixing, cap piercing, sample preparation, and analysis. Its automated cap-piercing technology helps reduce staff exposure to biohazardous samples. For more information, please visit www.beckmancoulter.com and www.aquioscl.com

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