



Customer Focus

General Medical Laboratory Madison, Wisconsin
**Lab Makes Great Strides
In Reducing Steps**
*Wisconsin laboratory boosts efficiency forty percent with
Sebia system!*

In an era that celebrates individualism, it's hard to imagine an organization wanting people to act exactly alike. But then again, most organizations don't hold the fate of individual lives in their hands.

General Medical Laboratories (GML) in Madison, Wisconsin knew the potential downside of manual electrophoresis processing — it left too much to personal interpretation. "While our technologists have always done an outstanding job, there's no way to avoid the fact that it's virtually impossible to ensure each person performs a process in precisely the same way," explains Dr. James Thornberry, clinical pathologist, noting that this was only

one of the lab's key challenges. "Not only did we need to provide for ultimate standardization, we also needed to reduce the time it was taking to complete the electrophoresis process."

Operating as part of the Meriter Hospital family, GML provides service for the dynamic healthcare organization and serves as a reference lab for the surrounding region. With roughly eighty samples arriving at the facility for electrophoresis each month, it made sense to put on an automated system. A nearby hospital had implemented the Sebia HYDRASYS[®] system, so Dr. Thornberry and his colleagues decided to evaluate the instrument — along with competing systems — for themselves.

Sebia's HYDRASYS solution excels in several areas, according to Immunology Supervisor Sue Erickson. "The HYDRASYS system requires fewer steps to process urines — which meant we could conserve valuable time. It was such an easy instrument to use; it was almost a no-brainer," Erickson says. "And the quality of Sebia's gels is much better than what we observed with the other systems. We felt this was the best decision for us."

"These days, in the rare event that we have to repeat a test...it's because of the case itself as opposed to issues of test quality."

-Dr. Thornberry, Pathologist
General Medical Laboratory

The HYDRASYS expedites the multiple steps involved in electrophoresis and immunofixation, automatically handling everything from sample application to migration to incubation, staining, destaining and drying. The system is truly walk-away; the technologist simply loads samples in batches of either seven or fifteen, then chooses the program and starts the process. Staining is every bit as easy; gels are placed onto the staining rack and the process is initiated with the push of a button. Completing a batch from start to finish takes roughly 30 minutes. What's more, the system allows for two types of gels to be processed simultaneously, giving efficiency an extra boost.



Standing left to right: James Thornberry, M.D., Cynthia Fiore, Linda Biesenstein, Norma Merriam. Sitting: Henry Steady

Clearly Superior...

AUTOMATICALLY BETTER[™]



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Erickson estimates that since going live on the HYDRASYS, the lab has reduced the electrophoresis processing time by forty percent. "By not having to manually take the sample from step to step, we can spend that time taking care of other tasks in the interim — tasks such as fulfilling the testing in the core chemistry lab." She says that having the HYDRASYS on board has also enabled the lab to effectively redistribute assignments because electrophoresis has been rescheduled from five days a week to three.

As for the issue of consistency, the lab reports positive results with the HYDRASYS. Dr.

Thornberry notes an improvement in gel quality since switching to Sebia. "The gels we were

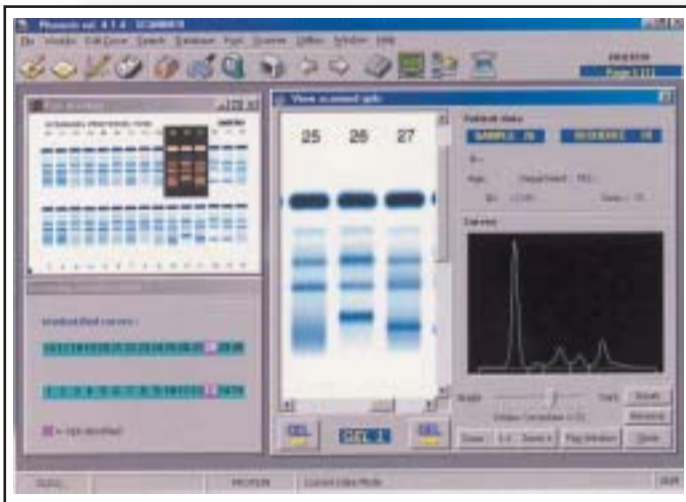
using previously weren't as clear — we'd often have problems with lanes bleeding into one another," he notes. "At times we would have to repeat tests because of inconsistent test application or hard to read gels. These days, in the rare event that we have to repeat a test, it's because the case itself is difficult as opposed to issues of test quality." He adds that the lanes on the Sebia gels are a little smaller than competing products, but the accompanying backlit magnifier assists with reading the bands directly from the gel. "Besides, the clarity of the gel more than makes up for the small size."

"Our (technical) representative has been invaluable; available to help us revamp our processes,..."

- Linda Biesenstein, Technologist

While GML's decision to automate electrophoresis was all about being "hands off," one aspect of Sebia that has the lab abuzz is the *hands on* approach of their Sebia technical representative. "Having this resource accessible to us is a major strong point," says Technologist Linda Biesenstein. "Our (technical) Representative has been invaluable; available to help us revamp our processes, and she

also conducted an educational seminar to help ensure proper interpretation of the gels. And while we rarely have problems with the instrument, she's readily available to resolve technical issues — which is a critical need in this environment."



Phoresis™ Scanning System

What if the HYDRASYS suddenly vanished and lab went back to manual processing? Erickson shudders at the thought. "We'd be spending more time standing around, ushering gels from step to step and getting less done. We'd be re-doing more tests because of unsatisfactory quality," she says. "Now that we've seen how Sebia has enhanced our operations, we couldn't imagine doing electrophoresis any other way."

About General Medical Laboratories and Meriter

GML provides reference laboratory services to physicians, clinics, hospitals, schools, researchers, skilled nursing facilities and rehabilitation treatment facilities across south central Wisconsin. Being a part of the Meriter Healthcare System it has served the community along with the hospital. Meriter Hospital is locally directed, not-for-profit, 448-bed community hospital providing treatment in more than 30 medical specialties. Meriter has through the years found ways to meet the area's evolving health-care needs.

