

Spring 2000 STR MegaPlex Technology Workshop

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The Third Annual Fluorescent STR MegaPlex Technology Workshop was held March 12–17, 2000, at the Palmetto Dunes Resort on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. This meeting was sponsored by The Bode Technology Group, Inc., Promega Corporation and Hitachi Software Engineering America, Ltd. Dr. Cecelia Crouse of the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office and Jeff Ban of the Virginia Division of Forensic Science, along with many others, provided support for this meeting. The attendance increased this year from 90 to over 110 participants. Twenty laboratories were represented including, for the first time, international guests from Rio de Janeiro, Puerto Rico, Barbados and the Bahamas.

At the opening reception on the evening of Sunday, March 12, Tom Bode (The Bode Technology Group, Inc.), Tom Mozer (Promega Corporation) and Lenny Klevan (Hitachi) welcomed the participants. Ben Perillo of the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office and Paul Ferrara of the Virginia Division of Forensic Science then gave presentations on quality assurance programs as a template for other disciplines, and on the importance of Forensic DNA examiners now and in the future.

This year, the format of the meeting was changed to include an Advanced Session (March 13 and 14), a Joint Session (March 15), and an Introductory Session (March 16), followed by a Technical Leaders Meeting (March 17). Presentations and discussions during the Advanced Session included the results of a survey completed by each laboratory, an update on FMBIO® analysis and Starcall™ software, a discussion of the validation requirements for MegaPlex systems, interpretation, population statistics (courtroom challenges, identity, microvariants, etc.), interesting/difficult case reviews and CODIS. During the Joint Session, Margaret Kline from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) discussed quantification issues, and several research projects and courtroom experiences were also covered. The Introductory Session consisted of a review of DNA analysis from the origins of repetitive sequences through the analysis of amplified product using the FMBIO® instrument. On the final day of the meeting, the Technical Leaders gathered to discuss issues such as case review policies, auditing, streamlining casework and training.

Because of the relevant topics presented and the open discussions generated, the meeting was educational for all those in the ever evolving field of forensic DNA analysis. Needless to say, the Fourth Annual Fluorescent STR MegaPlex Technology Workshop is already being planned.



Attendees at the Third Annual STR MegaPlex Workshop.

The Third Annual STR MegaPlex Technology Workshop was held March 12–17, 2000, on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. Many topics relevant to the field of forensic DNA analysis were presented during the course of this five-day workshop.

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