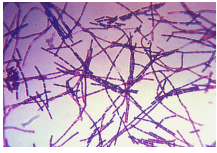


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By: Tudor Vieru, Science Editor



Anthrax spores, seen here through other viewing methods
Wikimedia Commons

Novel Tool for Anthrax Detection Works Flawlessly

It has maximum accuracy and reliability

The New Zealand-based company Veritide Ltd. announced yesterday, June 25th, that it managed to create a device able to detect anthrax spores at the 100-percent efficiency marker. In over two weeks of studies, conducted at the Midwest Research Institute, in Florida, the Ceeker® (pronounced "seeker") portable bacterial detection device also detected 95 percent of anthrax cases, when the bacteria was placed in analyzed samples along hoax substances, which are similar to it in most aspects. The find will be presented broadly at the Biodetection Technologies 2009 conference, held between June 25th-26th, at the Marriot Baltimore Inner Harbor, in Baltimore, Maryland.

"We knew that our innovative Ceeker is capable of producing outstanding results in distinguishing between anthrax and look-alike hoax substances, and now we have definitive data confirming its performance. Even better, these extraordinary results were generated by a small portable handheld system that requires no special skills or training to operate and that can produce a result within minutes, enabling first responders to rapidly determine whether the situation is a nuisance or a major threat to public health," the Veritide Chief Executive Officer, Andrew Rudge, PhD, explains.

This device's success rate was also analyzed by the Environmental Science and Research (ESR), a New Zealand forensic testing agency., which came to similar conclusions about its effectiveness as the US testers. Ceeker uses technology from New Zealand as well, developed at the University of Canterbury. Its optical analysis method makes use of ultraviolet light and special algorithms that are extremely efficient at detecting anthrax spores within a sample, and also at differentiating them from other substances. Additionally, because of its special construction, the machine does not destroy the sample upon analysis, allowing it to be later analyzed by forensics.

"It is gratifying to present these outstanding results from a system that has so much potential to reduce the large costs and losses in productivity and peace of mind caused by our current inability to easily distinguish between anthrax spores and harmless white powder. These new data definitively confirm the validity of the detection concepts underlying the Ceeker and should help fuel its wider use among such first responders as fire and police departments, HazMat teams, postal services, port and airport security, and defense and military authorities," Jacksonville State University Department Head and Professor of Physics Lou Reinisch, one of the inventors of Ceeker, says.

"Achieving these results represents a significant milestone and positions Veritide as the first company to offer proven technology capable of accurately and reliably detecting lethal anthrax spores, and to do so without destroying the sample. These new testing results are expected to unlock large potential markets for Veritide in North America and around the globe. We currently are in the process of identifying potential partners and additional investors to ensure this important technology is available worldwide," Rudge adds.