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Biophotonics: Photonic Solutions for Better Health Care II

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Editors

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Contents

xiii	Conference Committee
xv	<i>Introduction</i>

SESSION 1 ADVANCED MICROSCOPIC METHODS

- 7715 03 **SIM and PALM: high-resolution microscopy methods and their consequences for cell biology** [7715-02]
G. Krampert, Carl Zeiss AG (Germany); I. Kleppe, T. Kalkbrenner, K. Weisshart, R. Wolleschensky, Carl Zeiss MicroImaging GmbH (Germany); M. Kempe, Carl Zeiss AG (Germany)
- 7715 04 **Influence of sample preparation and identification of subcellular structures in quantitative holographic phase contrast microscopy** [7715-03]
B. Kemper, L. Schmidt, S. Przibilla, C. Rommel, A. Vollmer, S. Ketelhut, J. Schnekenburger, G. von Bally, Westfälische Wilhelms-Univ. Münster (Germany)
- 7715 05 **Digital holography for second harmonic microscopy: application to 3D-tracking of nanoparticles** [7715-04]
E. Shaffer, C. Depeursinge, Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (Switzerland)
- 7715 06 **High resolution surface plasmon microscopy for cell imaging** [7715-05]
F. Argoul, Lab. Joliot-Curie and Lab. de Physique, CNRS, Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon (France); K. Monier, Lab. Joliot-Curie, CNRS, Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon (France); T. Roland, Lab. Joliot-Curie and Lab. de Physique, CNRS, Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon (France); J. Elezgaray, Lab. de Microbiologie et Biochimie Appliquée, CNRS, Univ. Bordeaux 1 (France); L. Berguiga, Lab. Joliot-Curie, CNRS, Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon (France)

SESSION 2 COHERENCE DOMAIN OPTICAL METHODS AND OPTICAL COHERENCE TOMOGRAPHY

- 7715 09 **Demonstration of PECVD SiC thermal delay lines for optical coherence tomography in the visible** [7715-08]
G. Pandraud, E. Margallo-Balbás, P. M. Sarro, Technische Univ. Delft (Netherlands)
- 7715 0A **Study and suppression of motion artifacts in full-field optical coherence tomography** [7715-09]
D. Sacchet, J. Moreau, P. Georges, A. Dubois, Lab. Charles Fabry de l'Institut d'Optique, CNRS, Univ. Paris-Sud (France)
- 7715 0B **High-power FDML laser for swept source-OCT at 1060 nm (Best Student Paper)** [7715-10]
S. Marschall, Technical Univ. of Denmark (Denmark); T. Klein, W. Wieser, B. Biedermann, Ludwig-Maximilians-Univ. München (Germany); K. Hsu, Micron Optics, Inc. (United States); B. Sumpf, K.-H. Hasler, G. Erbert, Ferdinand-Braun-Institut für Höchstfrequenztechnik (Germany); O. B. Jensen, C. Pedersen, Technical Univ. of Denmark (Denmark); R. Huber, Ludwig-Maximilians-Univ. München (Germany); P. E. Andersen, Technical Univ. of Denmark (Denmark)

SESSION 3 OPTICAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR PROCESS ANALYTICS AND QUALITY CONTROL I

- 7715 0E **Rejection of false saturation data in optical pulse-oximeter** [7715-13]
L. Scalise, P. Marchionni, V. Carnielli, Univ. Politecnica delle Marche (Italy)
- 7715 0G **A non-contact optical procedure for precise measurement of respiration rate and flow** [7715-15]
L. Scalise, P. Marchionni, I. Ercoli, Univ. Politecnica delle Marche (Italy)

SESSION 4 OPTICAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR PROCESS ANALYTICS AND QUALITY CONTROL II

- 7715 0I **Two-wavelength spectral imaging-based Thai rice breed identification** [7715-17]
S. Sumriddetchkajorn, National Electronics and Computer Technology Ctr. (Thailand);
K. Suwansukho, P. Buranasiri, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang (Thailand)

SESSION 5 OPTICAL TWEEZERS AND LASER CATAPULTING

- 7715 0K **Speckle field as a multiple particle trap** [7715-19]
V. G. Shvedov, The Australian National Univ. (Australia) and Taurida National Univ. (Ukraine);
A. V. Rode, The Australian National Univ. (Australia); Ya. V. Izdebskaya, The Australian
National Univ. (Australia) and Taurida National Univ. (Ukraine); A. S. Desyatnikov,
W. Krolikowski, Yu. S. Kivshar, The Australian National Univ. (Australia)
- 7715 0M **Peculiarities of RBC aggregation studied by double trap optical tweezers** [7715-21]
M. D. Khokhlova, E. V. Lyubin, A. G. Zhdanov, S. Yu. Rykova, T. N. Krasnova, I. A. Sokolova,
A. A. Fedyanin, Lomonosov Moscow State Univ. (Russian Federation)

SESSION 6 NANO-OPTICAL TOOLS AND METHODS FOR BIOPHOTONICS AND BIOMEDICAL OPTICS I

- 7715 0O **Green laser excited surface plasmon resonance biosensor utilizing highly sensitive phase interrogation detection** [7715-23]
H. Chen, National Yang-Ming Univ. (Taiwan) and Taipei City Hospital (Taiwan); W.-C. Hsu,
Y.-J. Wang, National Yang-Ming Univ. (Taiwan); T.-J. Yen, National Tsing Hua Univ. (Taiwan)
- 7715 0P **A cellular assay using metal-modified fluorescence lifetime analysis for high-content screening of protein internalization** [7715-24]
N. Cade, G. Fruhwirth, King's College London (United Kingdom); S. J. Archibald, The Univ. of
Hull (United Kingdom); T. Ng, D. Richards, King's College London (United Kingdom)
- 7715 0Q **Optimisation of fluorescent DNA labels for two-photon microscopy** [7715-25]
G. Metgé, Commissariat à l'Énergie Atomique (France) and Institut Curie, CNRS, Paris VI
(France); C. Fiorini-Debuisschert, F. Charra, Commissariat à l'Énergie Atomique (France);
G. Bordeau, E. Faurel, M. P. Teulade-Fichou, Institut Curie, CNRS, Paris VI (France)

- 7715 0R **Photothermolysis of tumor with gold nanoparticles guided by NIR and acoustic thermometries** [7715-26]
M. A. Sirotnikina, M. V. Shirmanova, M. L. Bugrova, L. B. Shopova, V. V. Elagin, Nizhny Novgorod State Medical Academy (Russian Federation); P. V. Subochev, V. A. Kamensky, A. D. Mansfel'd, Institute of Applied Physics (Russian Federation); V. A. Nadtochenko, Institute of Problems of Chemical Physics (Russian Federation); E. V. Zagainova, Nizhny Novgorod State Medical Academy (Russian Federation)

SESSION 7 NANO-OPTICAL TOOLS AND METHODS FOR BIOPHOTONICS AND BIOMEDICAL OPTICS II

- 7715 0S **In vitro and in vivo studies on laser-activated gold nanorods for applications in photothermal therapies (Invited Paper)** [7715-27]
R. Pini, F. Ratto, P. Matteini, Istituto di Fisica Applicata Nello Carrara (Italy); S. Centi, Univ. degli Studi di Firenze (Italy); F. Rossi, Istituto di Fisica Applicata Nello Carrara (Italy)
- 7715 0U **High performance multichannel photonic biochip sensors for future point of care diagnostics: an overview on two EU-sponsored projects** [7715-29]
D. Giannone, A. Kaźmierczak, F. Dortu, Multitel A.S.B.L. (Belgium); L. Vivien, Institut d'Électronique Fondamentale, Univ. Paris-Sud XI (France); H. Sohlström, Royal Institute of Technology (Sweden)
- 7715 0V **Detection of MMP-8 via porous silicon microcavity devices functionalized with human antibodies** [7715-30]
M. Martin, Groupe d'Etude des Semi-conducteurs, CNRS, Univ. Montpellier 2 (France); C. Taleb Bendiab, L. Massif, F. J. G. Cuisinier, Univ. Montpellier 1 (France); C. Gergely, Groupe d'Etude des Semi-conducteurs, CNRS, Univ. Montpellier 2 (France)

SESSION 8 SPECTROSCOPIC AND MICROSCOPIC METHODS I

- 7715 0Z **Diffuse reflectance measurement tool for laparoscopic surgery** [7715-34]
M. E. Giardini, A. B. Klemm, A. Di Falco, T. F. Krauss, Univ. of St. Andrews (United Kingdom)
- 7715 11 **Monitoring intra-cellular lipid metabolism in macrophages by Raman- and CARS-microscopy (Invited Paper)** [7715-36]
C. Matthäus, G. Bergner, C. Krafft, B. Dietzek, IPHT Jena (Germany); S. Lorkowski, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany); J. Popp, IPHT Jena (Germany) and Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany)

SESSION 9 SPECTROSCOPIC AND MICROSCOPIC METHODS II

- 7715 14 **A microfluidic platform for chip-based DNA detection using SERS and silver colloids** [7715-39]
K. K. Strelau, K. Weber, R. Möller, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany); W. Fritzsche, IPHT Jena (Germany); J. Popp, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany) and IPHT Jena (Germany)
- 7715 16 **Classification of human colonic tissues using FTIR spectra and advanced statistical techniques** [7715-41]
A. Zwielly, Ben-Gurion Univ. of the Negev (Israel); S. Argov, Soroka Univ. Medical Ctr. (Israel); A. Salman, Sami Shamoon College (Israel); E. Bogomolny, S. Mordechai, Ben-Gurion Univ. of the Negev (Israel)

SESSION 10 SPECTROSCOPIC AND MICROSCOPIC METHODS III

- 7715 18 **Morphological differences between normal and cancerous mammalian cells via multitechnique microscopic studies [7715-42]**
M. Saab, Groupe d'Etude des Semi-conducteurs, CNRS, Univ. Montpellier 2 (France); E. Estephan, Univ. Montpellier 1 (France); M. Martin, Groupe d'Etude des Semi-conducteurs, CNRS, Univ. Montpellier 2 (France); N. Bec, C. Larroque, Institut de Recherche en Cancérologie de Montpellier, Univ. Montpellier 1 (France); T. Cloître, Groupe d'Etude des Semi-conducteurs, CNRS, Univ. Montpellier 2 (France); F. Cuisinier, Univ. Montpellier 1 (France); C. Gergely, Groupe d'Etude des Semi-conducteurs, CNRS, Univ. Montpellier 2 (France)
- 7715 1B **Automated ensemble segmentation of epithelial proliferation, necrosis, and fibrosis using scatter tumor imaging [7715-45]**
P. B. Garcia-Allende, O. M. Conde, Univ. de Cantabria (Spain); V. Krishnaswamy, Dartmouth College (United States); P. J. Hoopes, Dartmouth College (United States) and Dartmouth Medical School (United States); B. W. Pogue, Dartmouth College (United States); J. Mirapeix, J. M. Lopez-Higuera, Univ. de Cantabria (Spain)

SESSION 11 FIBER AND PHOTONIC CRYSTAL BIOMEDICAL TECHNOLOGIES

- 7715 1C **Aptamer-based surface plasmon fibre sensor for thrombin detection [7715-46]**
T. Allsop, D. Nagel, Aston Univ. (United Kingdom); R. Neal, Univ. of Plymouth (United Kingdom); E. M. Davies, C. Mou, Aston Univ. (United Kingdom); P. Bond, Univ. of Plymouth (United Kingdom); S. Rehman, STR Fiber Technologies (United Kingdom); K. Kalli, Cyprus Univ. of Technology (Cyprus); D. J. Webb, Aston Univ. (United Kingdom); P. Calverhouse, Univ. of Plymouth (United Kingdom); M. Mascini, Univ. degli Studi di Firenze (Italy); I. Bennion, Aston Univ. (United Kingdom)
- 7715 1D **OFSETH: optical technologies embedded in smart medical textile for continuous monitoring of respiratory motions under magnetic resonance imaging [7715-47]**
F. Narbonneau, Multitel A.S.B.L. (Belgium); J. De Jonckheere, M. Jeanne, Ctr. Hospitalier Regional Univ. de Lille (France); D. Kinet, Multitel A.S.B.L. (Belgium); J. Witt, K. Krebber, Bundesanstalt für Materialforschung und -prüfung (Germany); B. Paquet, CENTEXBEL (Belgium); A. Depré, Elasta NV (Belgium); L. T. D'Angelo, Technische Univ. München (Germany); T. Thiel, AOS GmbH (Germany); R. Logier, Ctr. Hospitalier Regional Univ. de Lille (France)
- 7715 1E **DNA recognition by peptide nucleic acid-modified PCFs: from models to real samples [7715-48]**
S. Selleri, E. Coscelli, F. Poli, D. Passaro, A. Cucinotta, C. Lantano, R. Corradini, R. Marchelli, Univ. degli Studi di Parma (Italy)
- 7715 1F **Laser two-photon polymerization micro- and nanostructuring over a large area on various substrates [7715-49]**
M. Malinauskas, V. Purlys, A. Žukauskas, G. Bičkauskaitė, T. Gertus, P. Danilevičius, D. Paipulas, M. Rutkauskas, H. Gilbergs, Vilnius Univ. (Lithuania); D. Baltriukienė, Institute of Biochemistry (Lithuania); L. Lukšaitė, Vilnius Univ. (Lithuania); R. Širmenis, Vilnius Univ. Hospital (Lithuania); V. Lukšaitė, Institute of Biochemistry (Lithuania); R. Gadonas, Vilnius Univ. (Lithuania); V. Sirvydis, Vilnius Univ. Hospital (Lithuania); A. Piskarskas, Vilnius Univ. (Lithuania)

SESSION 12 BIOCHIPS

- 7715 1H **Highly integrated biophotonics towards all-organic lab-on-chip systems [7715-51]**
C. Vannahme, S. Klinkhammer, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (Germany); F. Brinkmann, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (Germany) and Westfälische Wilhelms-Univ. Münster (Germany); S. Lenhert, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (Germany), Westfälische Wilhelms-Univ. Münster (Germany), and Florida State Univ. (United States); T. Großmann, U. Lemmer, T. Mappes, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (Germany)

SESSION 13 BLOOD OXYGENATION

- 7715 1I **Concentrations of hemoglobin fractions calculation using modified Lambert-Beer law and solving of an ill-posed system of equations [7715-52]**
O. Abdallah, M. Natsheh, K. Abo Alam, Q. Qananwah, A. Al Nabulsi, A. Bolz, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (Germany)

SESSION 14 PDT

- 7715 1K **Autofluorescence of pigmented skin lesions using a pulsed UV laser with synchronized detection: clinical results [7715-54]**
H. P. H. Cheng, Technical Univ. of Denmark (Denmark); P. Svenmarker, H. Xie, Lund Univ. (Sweden); P. Tiemand-Lichtenberg, O. B. Jensen, Technical Univ. of Denmark (Denmark); N. Bendsoe, K. Svanberg, Lund Univ. Hospital (Sweden); P. M. Petersen, C. Pedersen, Technical Univ. of Denmark (Denmark); S. Andersson-Engels, Lund Univ. (Sweden); P. E. Andersen, Technical Univ. of Denmark (Denmark)
- 7715 1L **Assessment of photodynamic damage on *Escherichia coli* via atomic force microscopy [7715-55]**
S. C. Núñez, Instituto de Pesquisa em Saúde (Brazil); M. Simões Ribeiro, Instituto de Pesquisas Energéticas e Nucleares (Brazil); A. Silva Garcez, São Leopoldo Mandic (Brazil); W. Miyakawa, Instituto de Estudos Avançados (Brazil)
- 7715 1M **Protoporphyrin IX for photodynamic therapy of brain tumours [7715-56]**
A. Johansson, F. W. Kreth, A. Ardeshiri, Univ. Clinic Großhadern (Germany); W. Stummer, Univ. Clinic Münster (Germany); O. Schnell, J. Herms, G. Palte, W. Beyer, H. Stepp, Univ. Clinic Großhadern (Germany)
- 7715 1N **Photodynamic therapy on bladder cancer cells: further studies on the performance of Coimbra sensitizers [7715-57]**
A. M. d'A. Rocha Gonsalves, A. C. Serra, M. Pineiro, M. F. Botelho, Univ. de Coimbra (Portugal)
- 7715 1O **Light attenuation in rat skin following low level laser therapy on burn healing process [7715-58]**
D. F. Teixeira Silva, Univ. Nove de Julho (Brazil); M. Simões Ribeiro, Instituto de Pesquisas Energéticas e Nucleares (Brazil)

SESSION 15 ENVIRONMENTAL BIOPHOTONICS

- 7715 1Q **Professional and household dosimeters for UV biologically active ranges of solar radiation on the basis of ZnSe semiconductor-metal nanostructures [7715-134]**
V. D. Ryzhikov, G. M. Onyshchenko, Institute for Single Crystals (Ukraine); C. F. Smith, Lawrence Livermore National Lab. (United States); O. D. Opolonin, O. K. Lysetska, L. A. Piven', I. M. Zenya, O. V. Volkov, E. F. Voronkin, S. N. Galkin, I. Bendeberia, K. Katrunov, Institute for Single Crystals (Ukraine)

SESSION 16 DENTAL BIOPHOTONICS

- 7715 1R **Photodynamic therapy on bacterial reduction in dental caries: in vivo study [7715-60]**
A. Baptista, R. Araujo Prates, I. T. Kato, M. M. Amaral, A. Zanardi de Freitas, M. Simões Ribeiro, Instituto de Pesquisas Energéticas e Nucleares (Brazil)
- 7715 1S **Teeth material ablation by femtosecond laser [7715-61]**
I. Ionita, Univ. of Bucharest (Romania); M. Zamfirescu, National Institute for Laser, Plasma and Radiation (Romania)
- 7715 1T **Root canal filling evaluation using optical coherence tomography [7715-62]**
M. L. Negruțiu, C. Sinescu, F. Topala, L. Nica, Univ. de Medicina si Farmacie Victor Babes, Timisoara (Romania); C. Ioniță, Univ. at Buffalo (United States); C. Marcauteanu, L. Goguta, Univ. de Medicina si Farmacie Victor Babes, Timisoara (Romania); A. Bradu, G. Dobre, Univ. of Kent (United Kingdom); M. Rominu, Univ. de Medicina si Farmacie Victor Babes, Timisoara (Romania); A. G. Podoleanu, Univ. of Kent (United Kingdom)

POSTER SESSION

- 7715 1V **Biomolecular detection using a metal semiconductor field effect transistor [7715-31]**
E. Estephan, Univ. Montpellier 1 (France); M. Saab, P. Buzatu, R. Aulombard, Groupe d'Etude des Semi-conducteurs, CNRS, Univ. Montpellier 2 (France); F. J. G. Cuisinier, Univ. Montpellier 1 (France); C. Gergely, T. Cloitre, Groupe d'Etude des Semi-conducteurs, CNRS, Univ. Montpellier 2 (France)
- 7715 1W **Optical coherence tomography as approach for the minimal invasive localization of the germinal disc in ovo before chicken sexing [7715-64]**
A. Burkhardt, S. Geißler, E. Koch, Technische Univ. Dresden (Germany)
- 7715 1Y **Biconical tapered optical fiber biosensor for measuring refractive index of α -amino acids in aqueous D-glucose and sucrose solution [7715-67]**
M. I. Zibaii, H. Latifi, M. Karami, M. Gholami, S. M. Hosseini, M. H. Ghezelayagh, Shahid Beheshti Univ. (Iran, Islamic Republic of)
- 7715 1Z **Label free detection of DNA hybridization by refractive index tapered fiber biosensor [7715-68]**
M. I. Zibaii, H. Latifi, E. Ghanati, M. Gholami, S. M. Hosseini, Shahid Beheshti Univ. (Iran, Islamic Republic of)

- 7715 20 **Phytoplankton as a fluorescent bioindicator of ecotoxins in natural waters** [7715-69]
T. Gostev, F. Kouzminov, Lomonosov Moscow State Univ. (Russian Federation); M. Gorbunov, Rutgers, The State Univ. of New Jersey (United States); V. Fadeev, Lomonosov Moscow State Univ. (Russian Federation)
- 7715 21 **Fluorescent diagnostics of cyanobacteria** [7715-70]
F. I. Kouzminov, E. G. Maximov, Lomonosov Moscow State Univ. (Russian Federation); M. Y. Gorbunov, Rutgers, The State Univ. of New Jersey (United States); V. V. Fadeev, Lomonosov Moscow State Univ. (Russian Federation)
- 7715 23 **Real-time analysis of skin capillary-refill processes using blue LED** [7715-72]
E. Kviesis-Kippe, E. Cerkste, J. Spigulis, Univ. of Latvia (Latvia); L. Elhvalde, Children's Univ. Clinical Hospital (Latvia)
- 7715 24 **Real time optical coherence tomography monitoring of *Candida albicans* biofilm in vitro during photodynamic treatment** [7715-73]
L. C. Suzuki, R. Araujo Prates, M. P. Raele, A. Zanardi di Freitas, M. Simões Ribeiro, Instituto de Pesquisas Energéticas e Nucleares, CNEN (Brazil)
- 7715 26 **Monitoring of the vessel capillary density spatial pattern in epithelium phantom model** [7715-75]
R. Kanawade, G. Saiko, A. Douplik, Friedrich-Alexander-Univ. Erlangen-Nürnberg (Germany)
- 7715 28 **Non-contact measurement of ocular microtremor using laser speckle** [7715-77]
E. Kenny, Trinity College Dublin (Ireland); D. Coakley, G. Boyle, St. James's Hospital (Ireland)
- 7715 29 **Optical extraction of the helical pitch angle of amylopectin in starch** [7715-78]
S. Psilodimitrakopoulos, I. Amat-Roldan, P. Loza-Alvarez, Institut de Ciències Fotòniques (Spain); D. Artigas, Institut de Ciències Fotòniques (Spain) and Univ. Politècnica de Catalunya (Spain)
- 7715 2A **Assessing structural characteristics of axons in cortical neurons using polarization sensitive SHG** [7715-79]
S. Psilodimitrakopoulos, Institut de Ciències Fotòniques (Spain); V. Petegnief, G. Soria, N. de Vera, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (Spain); I. Amat-Roldan, Institut de Ciències Fotòniques (Spain); D. Artigas, Institut de Ciències Fotòniques (Spain) and Univ. Politècnica de Catalunya (Spain); A. M. Planas, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (Spain); P. Loza-Alvarez, Institut de Ciències Fotòniques (Spain)
- 7715 2B **Analysis of optical crosstalk in flexible imaging endoscopes based on multicore fibers** [7715-80]
N. Ortega-Quijano, F. Fanjul-Vélez, I. Salas-García, Ó. R. Hernández-Cubero, J. L. Arce-Diego, Univ. de Cantabria (Spain)
- 7715 2C **Towards noninvasive method for the detection of pathological tissue variations by mapping different blood parameters** [7715-82]
O. Abdallah, Q. Qananwah, K. Abo Alam, A. Bolz, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (Germany)

- 7715 2F **Fiber spectral domain optical coherence tomography for in vivo rat brain imaging** [7715-85]
Y. Xie, T. Bonin, Univ. of Lübeck (Germany); S. Loeffler, Univ. Medical Ctr. Schleswig-Holstein (Germany); G. Huettmann, Univ. of Lübeck (Germany); V. Tronnier, Univ. Medical Ctr. Schleswig-Holstein (Germany); U. G. Hofmann, Univ. of Lübeck (Germany)
- 7715 2J **Micro-Raman spectroscopy of tissue samples for oral pathology follow-up monitoring** [7715-89]
I. Delfino, Univ. degli Studi della Tuscia (Italy); C. Camerlingo, Istituto di Cibernetica, CNR (Italy); F. Zenone, Univ. degli Studi di Napoli Federico II (Italy); G. Perna, V. Capozzi, Univ. di Foggia (Italy); N. Cirillo, G. M. Gaeta, M. Lepore, Seconda Univ. degli Studi di Napoli (Italy)
- 7715 2K **High resolution single-mode-fiber-based sensor for intravascular detection of fluorescent molecular probes** [7715-91]
R. N. Razansky, M. S. Mueller, A. Borisov, A. W. Koch, Technische Univ. München (Germany); F. A. Jaffer, Massachusetts General Hospital (United States) and Harvard Medical School (United States); V. Ntziachristos, Technische Univ. München (Germany)
- 7715 2L **Effect of light scattering superficial layer on the accuracy of flow velocity profiles measurements by Doppler optical coherence tomography** [7715-92]
J. Lauri, Univ. of Oulu (Finland); A. V. Bykov, Univ. of Oulu (Finland) and Lomonosov Moscow State Univ. (Russian Federation); A. V. Priezzhev, Lomonosov Moscow State Univ. (Russian Federation); R. Myllylä, Univ. of Oulu (Finland)
- 7715 2M **Combining optical coherence tomography with fluorescence microscopy: a closer look into tissue** [7715-93]
M. Gaertner, P. Cimalla, L. Knels, S. Meissner, E. Koch, Dresden Univ. of Technology (Germany)
- 7715 2N **3D topology and arrangement of proteins inside ceramide-rich domains** [7715-94]
C. Imhäuser, Univ. of Applied Sciences and Arts Dortmund (Germany) and Univ. Duisburg-Essen (Germany); H. Gulbins, E. Gulbins, Univ. Duisburg-Essen (Germany); H.-G. Lipinski, Univ. of Applied Sciences and Arts Dortmund (Germany)
- 7715 2P **Comparison of spectral colorimetric measurements vs. color pictures in dermatology** [7715-96]
P. Blain, F. Michel, V. Moreau, O. Vanhootegehem, Y. Renotte, S. Habraken, Univ. de Liège (Belgium)
- 7715 2Q **Implantable reflectance pulse transit time blood pressure sensor with oximetry capability** [7715-97]
J. Fiala, R. Gehrke, M. Theodor, P. Bingger, Albert-Ludwigs-Univ. Freiburg (Germany); K. Förster, C. Heilmann, F. Beyersdorf, Univ. Hospital Freiburg (Germany); H. Zappe, A. Seifert, Albert-Ludwigs-Univ. Freiburg (Germany)
- 7715 2R **Photochemical predictive analysis of photodynamic therapy with non-homogeneous topical photosensitizer distribution in dermatological applications** [7715-98]
I. Salas-García, F. Fanjul-Vélez, N. Ortega-Quijano, Univ. de Cantabria (Spain); M. López-Escobar, Marqués de Valdecilla Univ. Hospital (Spain); J. L. Arce-Diego, Univ. de Cantabria (Spain)

- 7715 2U **Detection of colon and rectum cancers by terahertz techniques** [7715-101]
F. Wahaia, Univ. do Porto (Portugal); G. Valusis, Institute of Semiconductor Physics (Lithuania); L. M. Bernardo, Univ. do Porto (Portugal); A. Oliveira, Lab. Anatomia Patológica (Portugal) and Hospital São Sebastião (Portugal); J. Macutkevic, I. Kasalynas, D. Seliuta, Institute of Semiconductor Physics (Lithuania)
- 7715 2V **Full-field optical coherence tomography at 800 nm and 1300 nm simultaneously** [7715-102]
D. Sacchet, J. Moreau, P. Georges, A. Dubois, Lab. Charles Fabry de l'Institut d'Optique, CNRS, Univ. Paris-Sud (France)
- 7715 2W **Biomedical imaging by means of linear and non-linear Raman microspectroscopy** [7715-104]
N. Vogler, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany) and IPHT Jena (Germany); T. Meyer, I. Latka, IPHT Jena (Germany); T. Bocklitz, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany); Ch. Krafft, IPHT Jena (Germany); V. Deckert, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany) and IPHT Jena (Germany); N. Bendsoe, K. Svanberg, Lund Univ. Hospital (Sweden); B. Dietzek, J. Popp, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany) and IPHT Jena (Germany)
- 7715 2X **Two channel microfluidic CARS for quantifying pure vibrational contrast of model analytes** [7715-105]
B. Dietzek, IPHT Jena (Germany) and Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany); G. Bergner, IPHT Jena (Germany) and Univ. Osnabrück (Germany); D. Akimov, D. Malsch, T. Henkel, IPHT Jena (Germany); S. Schlücker, Univ. Osnabrück (Germany); J. Popp, IPHT Jena (Germany) and Friedrich-Schiller Univ. Jena (Germany)
- 7715 2Z **Multi-spectral mapping of in vivo skin hemoglobin and melanin** [7715-107]
D. Jakovels, J. Spigulis, I. Saknite, Univ. of Latvia (Latvia)
- 7715 30 **Biotissue structure investigation using ultra-short pulsed laser polarimetry** [7715-108]
I. Ionita, O. Toma, Univ. of Bucharest (Romania)
- 7715 31 **Determination of local optical properties of the rat barrel cortex during neural activation: Monte-Carlo approach to light propagation** [7715-109]
E. V. Migacheva, S. R. Chamot, O. Seydoux, Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (Switzerland); B. Weber, Univ. Hospital Zürich (Switzerland); C. Depeursinge, Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (Switzerland); P. Marquet, P. J. Magistretti, Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (Switzerland) and Ctr. Hospitalier Univ. Vaudois (Switzerland)
- 7715 35 **Utilizing of anisotropic plasmonic arrays for analytics** [7715-113]
D. Cialla, J. Petschulat, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany); U. Huebner, H. Schneidewind, M. Zeisberger, R. Mattheis, IPHT Jena (Germany); T. Perisch, R. Moeller, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany); J. Popp, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany) and IPHT Jena (Germany)
- 7715 36 **Fabrication of regular patterned SERS arrays by electron beam lithography** [7715-114]
U. Huebner, H. Schneidewind, IPHT Jena (Germany); D. Cialla, K. Weber, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany); M. Zeisberger, R. Mattheis, IPHT Jena (Germany); R. Moeller, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany); J. Popp, IPHT Jena (Germany) and Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany)

- 7715 3T **Raman microscopy of individual living human embryonic stem cells** [7715-115]
 S. M. Novikov, J. Beermann, S. I. Bozhevolnyi, Univ. of Southern Denmark (Denmark);
 L. M. Harkness, M. Kassem, Univ. Hospital of Odense (Denmark)
- 7715 39 **Easy characterization of SERS substrates of enzymatically produced silver nanoparticles and their applications in the area of bioanalytics** [7715-117]
 K. K. Strelau, T. Schüler, R. Möller, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany); W. Fritzsche, IPHT Jena (Germany); J. Popp, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany) and IPHT Jena (Germany)
- 7715 3A **Sedimentation of agglomerated nanoparticles under cell culture conditions studied by image based analysis** [7715-118]
 D. Schippritt, Univ. of Applied Sciences Dortmund (Germany); M. Wiemann, Univ. Duisburg-Essen(Germany) and IBE R&D GmbH (Germany); H.-G. Lipinski, Univ. of Applied Sciences Dortmund (Germany)
- 7715 3C **Selective removal of carious dentin using a nanosecond pulsed laser with a wavelength of 6.02 µm** [7715-120]
 K. Ishii, M. Saiki, Osaka Univ. (Japan); K. Yasuo, K. Yamamoto, K. Yoshikawa, Osaka Dental Univ. (Japan); K. Awazu, Osaka Univ. (Japan) and Univ. of Fukui (Japan)
- 7715 3G **ZnO and TiO₂ particles: a study on nanosafety and photoprotection** [7715-124]
 A. Popov, Univ. of Oulu (Finland) and Lomonosov Moscow State Univ (Russian Federation); X. Zhao, A. Zvyagin, Macquarie Univ. (Australia); J. Lademann, Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin (Germany); M. Roberts, W. Sanchez, The Univ. of Queensland (Australia); A. Priezzhev, Lomonosov Moscow State Univ. (Russian Federation); R. Myllylä, Univ. of Oulu (Finland)
- 7715 3I **Exploring red blood cell membrane dynamics with digital holographic microscopy** [7715-126]
 D. Boss, Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (Switzerland); J. Kuehn, Ctr. Hospitalier Univ. Vaudois (Switzerland); C. Depeursinge, Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (Switzerland); P. J. Magistretti, P. Marquet, Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (Switzerland) and Ctr. Hospitalier Univ. Vaudois (Switzerland)
- 7715 3J **Broadband radiometry for photodynamic therapy** [7715-127]
 M. S. Folgosi-Correa, J. P. Caly, G. E. C. Nogueira, Instituto de Pesquisas Energéticas e Nucleares (Brazil)
- 7715 3N **Possibility of improvement of hemoglobin properties as biosensors' detection element** [7715-131]
 A. S. Martirosyan, H. R. Vardapetyan, Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) Univ. (Armenia); S. G. Tiratsuyan, Yerevan State Univ. (Armenia); A. A. Hovhannisan, Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) Univ. (Armenia)
- 7715 3P **FT-IR microspectroscopy characterization of supports for enzyme immobilization in biosensing applications** [7715-133]
 M. Portaccio, B. Della Ventura, Seconda Univ. degli Studi di Napoli (Italy); K. Gabrovska, I. Marinov, T. Godjevargova, Burgas Prof. Assen Zlatarov Univ. (Bulgaria); D. G. Mita, M. Lepore, Seconda Univ. degli Studi di Napoli (Italy)

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- 1 Advanced Microscopic Methods
Brett E. Bouma, Wellman Center for Photomedicine (United States)
- 2 Coherence Domain Optical Methods and Optical Coherence Tomography
Thomas R. Huser, University of California, Davis Medical Center (United States)
- 3 Optical Technologies for Process Analytics and Quality Control I
Maria Farsari, Foundation for Research and Technology-Hellas
(Greece)

- 4 Optical Technologies for Process Analytics and Quality Control II
Dennis L. Matthews, University of California, Davis Medical Center
(United States)
- 5 Optical Tweezers and Laser Catapulting
Dennis L. Matthews, University of California, Davis Medical Center
(United States)
- 6 Nano-optical Tools and Methods for Biophotonics and Biomedical Optics I
Roberto Pini, Istituto di Fisica Applicata Nello Carrara, CNR (Italy)
- 7 Nano-optical Tools and Methods for Biophotonics and Biomedical Optics II
Ilko K. Iliev, U.S. Food and Drug Administration (United States)
- 8 Spectroscopic and Microscopic Methods I
Lev T. Perelman, Harvard Medical School (United States)
- 9 Spectroscopic and Microscopic Methods II
Stefan Andersson-Engels, Lund University (Sweden)
- 10 Spectroscopic and Microscopic Methods III
Peter E. Andersen, Danmarks Tekniske Universitet (Denmark)
- 11 Fiber and Photonic Crystal Biomedical Technologies
Iulian G. Ionita, University of Bucharest (Romania)
- 12 Biochips
Stefano Selleri, Università degli Studi di Parma (Italy)
- 13 Blood Oxygenation
Stefano Selleri, Università degli Studi di Parma (Italy)
- 14 PDT
Ann Johansson, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (Germany)
- 15 Environmental Biophotonics
Hugo Thienpont, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium)
- 16 Dental Biophotonics
Hugo Thienpont, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium)

Introduction

Biophotonics is a research area on the rise. Its goal is the development of new technologies and methods for medical diagnosis and therapy and for the analysis of cell processes, the understanding of which is an important prerequisite for both diagnosis, as well as therapy. Ultimately, biophotonics will not only help to increase well-being and the quality of life, but will also assist against exploding health-care costs due to our aging society.

Of utmost importance is the alignment of research and development in this field along the needs of the users, which are in many cases not, or at least not sufficient well-known. Therefore, the conference featured a special section called "Towards a Better Health Care: Unmet Medical Needs," where renowned physicians from several medical fields like pathology, oncology, and infectious diseases explained their needs to the technology- and method-developers, an event which received much attention from a large audience.

The Biophotonics conference, in the framework of Photonics Europe, was the largest of the technical conferences consisting this year of 135 presentations, including five keynote lectures, which were supported by the European Network of Excellence for Biophotonics Photonics4Life. Thomas R. Huser, from UC Davis Medical Ctr. (USA), gave a presentation on imaging of HIV transfer between T cells by employing 4D live cell fluorescence microscopy and 3D structured illumination super-resolution microscopy. Brett Bouma, from the Wellman Ctr. for Photomedicine (USA), presented results of the imaging of structure and function of vasculature with frequency domain OCT. Ilko K. Ilev, from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, presented a variety of novel multifunctional confocal imaging and sensing approaches employed in biophotonics and nanobiophotonics. Stefan Andersson-Engels, from Lund University (Sweden), detailed recent developments in his lab employing diffuse optical spectroscopy for biomedical diagnostics and treatment control, especially with regard to controlling the treatment of prostate cancer by PDT. Finally, Lev T. Perelman, from Harvard Medical School (USA), introduced in his presentation an endoscopic instrument employing polarized light scattering spectroscopy to detect early cancer in Barrett's esophagus.

The other 130 papers touched the broad field of biophotonics including advanced microscopic and spectroscopic methods, biochips, OCT, optical tweezers and endoscopic methods, as well as PDT and dental biophotonics. By far, the most papers dealt with microscopic and spectroscopic methods followed by OCT and nano optical methods. Biophotonics also contributed substantially to the Hot Topics sessions, as two out of three opening lectures on Monday in this session featured revolutionary biomedical applications of light. These were given by the award-winning researchers Prof. Stefan Hell (Max-Planck-Institute of

Biophysical Chemistry, Germany) and Prof. Kishan Dholakia (Univ. of St. Andrews, UK).

A majority of the presenters of the Biophotonics conference submitted manuscripts which can be found on the subsequent pages. We hope that these manuscripts will inspire and stimulate the reader to make her or his own contribution to this exciting and growing field.

Jürgen Popp
Wolfgang Drexler
Valery V. Tuchin
Dennis L. Matthews