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Lucence, Akribis scale up accurate mass-testing for COVID-19

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The collaboration will develop an automated saliva solubilization instrument



Singapore based precision medicine company Lucence and precision engineering company Akribis Systems in Singapore have announced a technology collaboration to scale up accurate mass-testing for COVID-19.

The collaboration will develop an automated saliva solubilization instrument to enable mass-processing of saliva for accurate molecular PCR diagnostic testing by laboratories.

Saliva is the ideal sample for mass-testing as compared to invasive swabs, because it is accurate, easier to collect, and risks of infection through aerosol are reduced for healthcare workers during specimen collection.

COVID-19 saliva mass-testing has been adopted by the United States, Hong Kong SAR, Japan, and Australian governments. Saliva solubilization is a key step to allow saliva to be effectively tested.

The SAFER™ Sample Collection Kit is registered as a Class A medical device with the Health Sciences Authority of Singapore and is an easy-to-use saliva collection kit that enables accessible, non-invasive, and safe sample collection via saliva. It inactivates collected virus within 45 seconds[5], thus achieving greater safety during transport for the community and the laboratory.

Together with the automated processing instrument, Lucence and Akribis aim to integrate precision medicine with precision engineering to solve a crucial saliva pre-processing step to maximize the accuracy of the COVID-19 test This collaborative effort would help to link the accessibility of the SAFER™ Sample collection approach to mass testing in service laboratories, which is critical to scaling cost-effective testing worldwide for airports, borders, and population testing

In a pilot study, Lucence and Akribis demonstrated the potential reduction of a medical lab technician's hands-on time from 30 min to less than 5 min.