

# **Time-Compressed Analysis of Polychlorinated Biphenyls in Biological Samples by Gas Chromatography/Time-of-Flight Mass Spectrometry.**

Jean-Francois Focant<sup>1</sup>, Edwin De Pauw<sup>1</sup>, James Grainger<sup>2</sup>, Donald G. Patterson Jr.<sup>2</sup> and Jean-Marie D. Dimandja<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Mass Spectrometry Laboratory, University of Liege, Belgium.

<sup>2</sup>Toxicology Branch, Division of Laboratory Sciences, National Centers for Environmental Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA 30341.

## **Abstract**

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are a class of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) that are important environmental toxicants. Due to their industrial production and extensive use until the late 1970's, these compounds are ubiquitous in the environment and various levels of human exposure (acute as well as chronic) have been well documented. Out of the 209 possible congeners, 38 congeners (all of which have at least one chlorine atom in the *ortho* position) are utilized as biomarkers in human blood. In order to evaluate their concentration levels in humans, robust analytical methods are required. These methods must be sensitive enough to allow part-per-trillion (ppt) level detection and fast enough for high sample throughput. This presentation will feature a new, fast gas chromatography/isotope dilution/time-of-flight mass spectrometry (GC/IDTOF MS) method that has been developed to enhance the capabilities of the current GC/IDHRMS method in use. The high data acquisition rate and powerful peak deconvolution software provided on the TOF MS allowed for time compression of the analytical run from 22 minutes (in the GC/IDHRMS method) to 5.6 minutes. Standard calibration curves have also been produced and quality control samples have been analyzed. Overall, this method has the potential to improve sample throughput to 100 samples a day for a single GC/TOF instrument, with detection limits in the low ppt range.