

# Tech Transfer eNews



The weekly companion to Technology Transfer Tactics

## **Innovation of the Week: Yissum introduces device that improves diagnostic value of saliva**

Yissum, the technology transfer company of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, introduced a novel device that enhances the diagnostic value of saliva. Speaking at the technology transfer session at the ILSI Biomed Israel 2008 conference, Professor Aaron Palmon unveiled a disposable device that clears whole saliva of its major protein constituent, alpha-amylase, allowing for detection of various low-abundance biomarkers. It has the potential to replace a host of tests that currently require drawing blood. According to Yissum President and CEO Nava Swersky Sofer, the technology “paves the way for a quick and efficient, non-invasive diagnostic tool which may replace current blood and other invasive tests. . . . We also believe it carries significant commercial potential.” Saliva contains most of the same molecules that can be found in blood and urine, but in lower concentrations. Studies indicate saliva may be useful for detecting various cancers, heart disease, diabetes, periodontal diseases, as well as myriad infectious agents such as HIV. A major barrier to its diagnostic utility, however, has been its high content of proteins whose function is to digest food. One protein in particular, Amylase, is extremely abundant and constitutes up to 60% of saliva proteins, which can mask the presence of other protein components. Professor Palmon’s device removes amylase from whole saliva (and other body fluids) in a simple and efficient procedure that uses modified potato starch to absorb large quantities of amylase.