

**Proceedings of the**

**Advanced Architectures in Photonics**

September 21–24, 2014

Prague, Czech Republic

Volume 1

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Proceeding of the Advanced Architectures in Photonics  
<http://aap-conference.com/aap-proceedings>

ISSN: 2336-6036  
September 2014

Published by **Involved Ltd.**  
Address: Siroka 1, 53701, Chrudim, Czech Republic  
Email: [info@involved.cz](mailto:info@involved.cz), Tel. +420 732 974 096



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# INTRODUCTION OF NEW LABORATORY DEVICE 4SPIN<sup>®</sup> FOR NANOTECHNOLOGIES



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## INTRODUCTION

4SPIN, a new desktop laboratory apparatus, has been developed for the deposition of nanomaterials for medical applications. The apparatus integrates different methods to enable the preparation of nanostructured scaffolds according to specific research requirements. These methods are Electrospinning, Electro spraying and Electroblowing. A variety of materials (including hyaluronic acid and its

derivates) have already been processes. Precisely aligned nanofibers with anisotropic properties have been collected by advanced Electrospinning. Small spherical structures have been prepared from low concentrated solutions in the Electro spraying mode. Morphological properties can be well controlled by Electroblowing process parameters. The device is designed to be run in a clean room (a variety of

accessories can be sterilized). The stability and accuracy of the production processes lead to the preparation of materials with highly repeatable and reproducible properties. Thanks to safety components, easy handling, intuitive device control and other benefits the apparatus significantly contributes to the acceleration of research progress in the field of medical application.

## MATERIALS

The set of presented polymers are studied for medical purposes and therefore are biocompatible and biodegradable. However, only HA derivatives, PLLA and PCL have the slow degradation rate suitable for cell culture.

- HYALURONIC ACID**
  - H<sub>2</sub>O/AcOH
  - 0.5% HA
- POLYLACTIC ACID**
  - DMF/chloroform
  - 12% PLLA
- POLYVINYLPIRROLIDONE**
  - H<sub>2</sub>O/ethanol
  - 5% PVP
- POLYLACTIC-GLYCOLIC ACID**
  - DMF/THF
  - 15% PLGA
- POLYETHYLENOXIDE**
  - H<sub>2</sub>O
  - 8% PEO
- POLYURETHANE**
  - DMF
  - 15% PU
- POLYCAPROLACTONE**
  - DMF/THF
  - 12% PCL
- POLYVINYL ALCOHOL**
  - H<sub>2</sub>O
  - 16% PVA

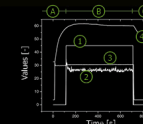


Legend: 1) Deposition chamber, 2) Collector, 3) Emitter with integrated dosing system, 4) Exhaust pipe, 5) 10.4" touch screen, 6) Multifunctional knob, 7) Central stop, 8) Terminals.

## PROCESSING PARAMETERS

The complete software solution has been designed specifically for this application in order to provide accurate and stable processes and easy-to-grasp intuitive control.

PARAMETER	AVAILABLE RANGE	TOL. ±	UNIT
High voltage	0 - 60	0.2	kV
Electrodes distance	50 - 250	2.5	mm
Collector revolutions	10 - 5000	10.0	rpm
Airflow	0 - 100	1.0	l·min <sup>-1</sup>
Air temperature	25 - 80	2.0	°C
Needle diameter	15 - 26		gauge
Solution volume	10, 20 or 30		ml



#	Parameter	Average	Max/Min	Unit
1	High voltage	45.99	+6.05	kV
2	Current	26.4	+2.0	µA
3	Airflow	30.7	+0.3	l·min <sup>-1</sup>
4	Air temperature	30.7	+1.7	°C

## EMITTERS

The system of emitters have been developed to fulfil the requirements of the spinability the prepared mixture and the very high process throughput. Dead-volume is from 500 µl.

**Single jet**  
E1

standard needle gauge 15/17/19/21/23/25  
optimal feed rate 3x

**Needleless rod**  
E3

ø18 mm  
optimal feed rate 8x

**Multi jet**  
E2

standard needle gauge 15/17/19/21/23/25  
optimal feed rate 6x

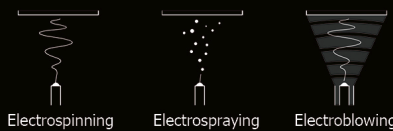
**Multi needleless**  
E4

ø45 mm alt. linear shape  
optimal feed rate 18x

Emitters are made of stainless steel, POM (alt. PP or PEEK) and with Luer-Lock fittings.

## METHODS

The electrospinning is a technique for production of fibers with diameters ranging from tens of nanometres to several micrometres from variety of solutions. The electro spraying technology results in the deposition of materials in the form of small beads. The electroblowing adds to the previous ones airflow at elevated temperature around the emitter.



## COLLECTORS

The collector design is adapted to the product requirements in terms of the size and internal morphology (random or regular) of the nanomaterial.

**Static continual**  
C1

randomly ordered structure up to (29 x 23) cm<sup>2</sup>

**Rotating continual**  
C3

random or aligned structure up to (26 x 23) cm<sup>2</sup>

**Static patterned**  
C2

void gap size from 20 to 60 mm uniaxially aligned structure up to (22 x 19) cm<sup>2</sup>

**Rotating patterned**  
C4

void gap size from 20 to 60 mm uniaxially aligned structure up to (25 x 23) cm<sup>2</sup>

## RESULTS

The emitters of the 4SPIN<sup>®</sup> apparatus allow different types of polymers to be spun, from synthetic to natural polymers and their blends. For example electroblowing is the only way in which high-molecular-weight hyaluronic acid can be spun in

its native form. Moreover, simultaneous solutions dosing allow composite and hybrids material formation. Different types of collectors can be used to generate aligned nanofiber layers with varying degrees of organization. By means of applying ad-

vanced collecting procedures, nanofiber layers can be created with controlled morphology (i.e. crossed woven-like structure) and with different macroscopic dimensions (e.g. 3D scaffolds).

HA  
87 nm

furran HA  
110 nm

GE  
172 nm

PEO  
203 nm

PA6  
226 nm

PU  
242 nm

PVA  
273 nm

PVP  
298 nm

PLGA  
376 nm

PCL  
380 nm

PAN  
407 nm

PLLA  
1170 nm

PU  
1.1 µm

PLGA  
1.6 µm

PCL  
1.3 µm

PA6  
0.9 µm

Additives  
HA/PEO + fluorescent colour

Composites  
PCL + PVA

Hybrides  
nanofiber's and microball

Aligned  
degree of alignment > 98%

Crossed  
woven-like structure

3D scaffolds  
(30 x 30 x 10) mm<sup>3</sup>

Stacked up  
(ø25 x 4) mm<sup>3</sup>, 40 layers

## CONCLUSIONS

Nanofibers prepared by electrostatic spinning have several advantages over bulk materials, in particular the huge surface-to-volume ratio, very high porosity and improved physico-chemical properties. Of the various processing methods (drawing, phase separation, self-alignment, etc.), electrospinning is the only viable method that can be further developed for the mass production of nanofibers from various polymers. Com-

pared to the conventional methods, electroblowing has the following advantages: 1) a combination of the forces of the electric field applied and the air flow increases the efficiency of the ES process, 2) the increased air flow temperature reduces the viscosity of the solution spun, 3) the air flow accelerates the evaporation of the solvent from the solution, 4) the speed and temperature of

airflow affect the morphology of the nanofibers. The 4SPIN<sup>®</sup> laboratory device is the only such device that offers this technology. All of these processes are a major focus of attention because of their versatility and ability to prepare materials on a scale of micro- and nanometres, which are highly suitable for Tissue Engineering and Regenerative Medicine applications.