Put It on the Board

Ion Torrent Genexus launched at AMP meeting

January 2020—Thermo Fisher Scientific launched at the Association for Molecular Pathology meeting in November its Ion Torrent Genexus System. It is a fully integrated, next-generation sequencing platform that features an automated specimen-to-report workflow, with results provided in a single day.

The company also introduced its Oncomine Precision Assay, a pan-cancer panel for the Genexus platform, for comprehensive genomic profiling from formalin-fixed, paraffin-embedded tissue and liquid biopsy samples with a single assay.

The Genexus System minimizes user intervention and the potential for human error. Thermo Fisher says the system requires minimal amounts of tissue sample and can run small batches cost-effectively to deliver a comprehensive report in one day. Together, the company said in a statement, "these features set the stage for molecular pathologists in the future to analyze NGS information in parallel with first-line testing modalities such as immunohistochemistry."

The Oncomine Precision Assay maximizes detection of relevant biomarkers, such as *EGFR, ALK, KRAS, BRAF, ROS1, NTRK, RET, HER2, ERBB2*, and others, via sequencing from FFPE and liquid biopsy samples. When combined with the Genexus System, Thermo Fisher said in its statement, molecular testing laboratories will soon be able to generate comprehensive NGS results within the same time frame as single-gene tests. The assay marks the first of several panels planned for oncology studies and other research application areas, the company added, including infectious disease, inherited disease, and reproductive health.

FDA approves QFT-Plus on Liaison platforms

Qiagen and DiaSorin announced in November the U.S. launch of an automated workflow for QuantiFeron-TB Plus on DiaSorin's Liaison platforms.

The Food and Drug Administration approved the Liaison QuantiFeron-TB Plus Test, developed by Qiagen and DiaSorin to offer streamlined laboratory automation for latent TB screening, supporting the conversion from tuberculin skin tests to blood-based QuantiFeron technology. The workflow pairs Qiagen's standard QuantiFeron-TB Gold Plus Blood Collection Tubes with DiaSorin's newly launched Liaison QuantiFeron-TB Plus detection assay.

Qiagen and DiaSorin began to collaborate in 2017 to develop new tests for the Liaison family of analyzers based on Qiagen assay technologies. Qiagen is also partnering with two leaders in liquid handling solutions to provide options for automated preanalytical processing for customers who implement the single-tube collection process for QFT-Plus. These collaborations enable customers to use the Hamilton Robotics Microlab Star automated liquid handling workstation or the Tecan Fluent Laboratory Automation workstation to automate the manual step of aliquoting samples from a single collection device (such as a standard lithium heparin blood collection tube) into QuantiFeron-TB Gold Plus tubes for analysis.

CE-IVD launch of Cobas Zika test

Roche announced in December the CE-IVD launch of its Cobas Zika test for use on the Cobas 6800/8800 systems.

The test is a qualitative in vitro nucleic acid screening test for the direct detection of Zika virus RNA in plasma specimens from donors of whole blood and blood components and other living donors.

New DPA president

Rivers

Michael Rivers, VP of Roche Digital Pathology, has been named president of the Digital Pathology Association, effective Jan. 1. He succeeds Marilyn Bui, MD, PhD, senior member in the Department of Anatomic Pathology and scientific director of analytic microscopy core at Moffitt Cancer Center.

Rivers and the DPA board are focused on growing the organization outside the U.S. “The goal of the DPA is to become the global driving force for digital pathology,” Rivers said in a statement. “I would like us to become the go-to organization for medical professionals that are interested in the adoption of digital pathology.”