



## Capillary scale liquid core waveguide based fluorescence detection in chromatography and flow analysis

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### ABSTRACT

A versatile, simple, liquid core waveguide (LCW)-based fluorescence detection system is described for capillary systems. A Teflon AF coated fused silica capillary serves as the LCW. The light source can be a conventional or high power (HP) light emitting diode (LED). The source can be coupled to the LCW directly or via an optical fiber. If a high power (necessarily heat sink mounted) emitter is used, the LCW is housed in a slightly larger opaque jacket tube and the LCW terminates just short of the jacket tube, which is sealed with an optical window. The influent liquid thus exits the LCW tube through the jacket annulus to exit via an aperture on the jacket tube. The problem of light coupling efficiently to the photodetector is thus solved by placing the tip of the LCW directly on the detector.

For excitation wavelengths of 365 nm (LED/HPLED) and 405 nm (LD), a sulfonic acid (sulfoxine)) chelate of aluminum ( $\lambda_{em,max} \sim 500$  nm) and Coumarin 30 as the model analyte. For source–detector combinations comprising (a) a LED, (b) a LD ( $\sim 5$  mW, abstracted from a “Blu-Ray” recorder) and (c) a photodiode, (b) a LD ( $\sim 5$  mW, abstracted from a “Blu-Ray” recorder) and (c) a tube (mPMT), and (c) a high power (210 mW @ 500 mA) surface-mount LED were, respectively, 1.7 pmol Al, 3–100 fmol Coumarin 30 (depending on time), and 4 fmol Al. In the last case, the relative standard deviation (R.S.D.) ( $n = 10$ ).

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### 1. Introduction

During the present decade, there has been a significant interest in capillary scale separation and detection techniques [1,2]. The capillary format allows for high efficiency rapid separations with low sample and reagent consumption. In favorable cases, it allows for very low pressure, even gravity-flow separations [3–5]. However, the measurement of trace amounts of analytes in  $\leq 1$   $\mu$ L injected sample volumes demand a lot from detection techniques.

Fluorimetry is among the most sensitive of analytical techniques. A focused laser beam offers an ideal way to provide small volume intense excitation. Although laser induced fluorescence (LIF) has been most often used in capillary electrophoresis (CE) and reviewed in that context [6,7], it is applicable for non-

electrophoretic capillary scale applications. Commercial LIF instrumentation is still expensive and sensitive to allow wide, especially pedagogical, use. Laser sources are intrinsically noisy, degraded by aging, and predicted on the basis of illumination of the limited number of wavelengths that can be conveniently and affordably address the problem of fitting the foot to fit the shoes; a whole range of devices and methods have been developed to address this problem. The recent availability of violet laser diodes (VLD) and digital video disc (DVD) players and recorders, which offer, however, inexpensive and compact fluorescence detectors with such sources.

The attractive performance of liquid core waveguide (LCW) for transverse/radial excitation fluores-