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Authors' Response

Sir:

We thank the authors for their interest in our article.

As stipulated in Vandenberg and van Oorschot (1), Phadebas® (Pharmacia Diagnostics AB, Uppsala, Sweden) tablets are essentially blue starch, and it is this that the figure of 0.9 g in 100 mL dH_20 relates.

The manufacturer of Phadebas® tablets lists the contents on their packaging as: 50 tablets, each tablet containing 45 mg blue starch. Hence, 0.9 g (or 900 mg) of blue starch is equivalent to 20 tablets in 100 mL and not the 4–5 tablets as suggested by Jackson and Hadi.

Willott and Griffiths (2), in describing the usefulness of the Phadebas® method in forensics, state that one Phadebas® tablet per 5 mL of distilled water has been found to be a convenient concentration for spraying the reagent onto filter paper. This equates to 20 tablets per 100 mL.

It appears that Jackson and Hadi have misinterpreted the methodology we used. The paper may have been easier to interpret if it had stated "20 tablets (containing 0.9 g blue starch) into 100 mL" rather than "0.9 g into 100 mL."

It is not surprising that Jackson and Hadi obtained poor and unclear results from the dilute preparation (4–5 tablets in 100 mL). The method we used (20 tablets in 100 mL) is close to what they routinely use (50 tablets in 200 mL), both of which provide good results.

References

1. Vandenberg N, van Oorschot RAH. The use of Polilight® in the detection of seminal fluid, saliva, and bloodstains and comparison with conventional chemical-based screening tests. J Forensic Sci 2006;51(2):361–70.
2. Willott G, Griffiths M. A new method for locating saliva stains—spotty paper for spotting spit. Forensic Sci Int 1980;15:79–83.

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