

**NEWS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Date: 20.08.2012****Image Attached****-Copy Starts-****Second ProtoCOL System used at Prestigious UCL Institute of Child Health  
To Increase Throughput of Vaccine Testing**

**Cambridge, UK:** Synbiosis, a world-leading manufacturer of automated microbiological systems, is pleased to announce its ProtoCOL 3 automated colony counter is being successfully used at one of Europe's largest children's health research facilities, the UCL (University College London) Institute of Child Health (ICH) to rapidly assess the effectiveness of novel vaccines.

Scientists in the Immunobiology Unit at UCL ICH are using a Synbiosis ProtoCOL 3 alongside a ProtoCOL HR to count thousands of small colonies of *Streptococcus pneumoniae* plated on modified Todd-Hewitt agar following an opsonophagocytic-killing assay (OPA). This is helping the researchers there to rapidly determine the efficacy of new pneumococcal vaccines.

With the increase in antibiotic resistance of many bacteria, the production of innovative pneumococcal vaccines is an area of critical importance, where the ProtoCOL 3 automated colony counter can generate and analyse data more rapidly.

Lucy Cowell, Laboratory Technician in the Immunobiology Unit at UCL ICH explained: "We routinely use OPA because we are the WHO reference lab for Pneumococcal serology and provide testing for many groups. We have been successfully using the ProtoCOL HR for this work for six years but have recently reached capacity with this system, as we now have around 150 post OPA plates to count every day. Since each plate has thousands of tiny colonies on it, it is virtually impossible to count them by eye, so manual counting is not an option."

Lucy continued: "To maintain consistency, which is important in clinical programmes, we assessed current automated colony counting technology and then decided to install the latest ProtoCOL system. We have been using the ProtoCOL 3 for several months, the system is smaller and its counting

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## .....Second ProtoCOL system installed/2

performance is faster than the ProtoCOL HR, so it was the right choice to help us increase our throughput.”

Martin Smith at Synbiosis concluded: “Accurately enumerating colonies after running an OPA is a task very few automated colony counting systems can perform well. The ProtoCOL has been recognised internationally for nearly a decade as the best colony counter for this application and we’re delighted to hear that our technology has been chosen yet again by scientists at the UCL ICH to help improve the productivity of their important trials. The continued support of one of Europe’s major child health research facilities shows that a ProtoCOL 3 is an intelligent choice for helping to speed up the development of novel pneumococcal vaccines.”

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### **Note to Editors**

### **About Synbiosis**

Synbiosis is a world-leading supplier of integrated imaging solutions for automatic counting and analysis of microbial colonies and zone measurement. The ProtoCOL and aCOLyte systems from Synbiosis are installed in food, pharmaceutical, environmental and research microbiology laboratories world-wide. Synbiosis uses established distribution channels to market its products internationally.

Synbiosis, founded in 1998 is a division of the Synoptics Group based in Cambridge UK. The Group’s other divisions, Syncroscopy and Syngene, specialise in digital imaging solutions for microscopy and molecular biology applications respectively. Synoptics currently employs 40 people in its UK and US subsidiary operation.

### **About the UCL Institute of Child Health**

The UCL Institute of Child Health pursues an integrated, multidisciplinary approach to enhance understanding, diagnosis, therapy and prevention of childhood disease. A broad range of paediatric issues is covered, from molecular genetics to population health sciences.

The UCL Institute of Child Health, in partnership with Great Ormond Street Hospital, is the largest centre in Europe devoted to clinical and basic research and postgraduate teaching in children's health. The ICH was established in 1945 and, in 2006, joined UCL's newly-formed Faculty of Biomedical Sciences, becoming the largest of its 14 Divisions and Institutes. ICH has maintained a particularly close relationship with GOSH throughout its sixty-three year existence. These close links have enabled ICH to pursue medical research in the context of child health and disease, based upon an integrated approach of careful clinical observation and scientific investigation. This allows an understanding of disease mechanisms and, in turn, leads to precise diagnosis and development of new therapies.