

Letters to the Editor

Use of Hydrogen Peroxide

Dear Sir:

Dr. A. R. Copeland, in the July 1981 issue (Vol. 26, No. 3, pages 552-553), described the use of ordinary 3% hydrogen peroxide in the removal of dried blood from gunshot wounds, in order to reveal underlying wound characteristics.

We have found his suggestion to be an excellent one, and to have another application: the demonstration of ruptured berry aneurysms in cases of subarachnoid hemorrhage. With the brain fresh, the arachnoid membrane is incised, and hydrogen peroxide applied; after foaming, it is washed off with water. Removal of blood in this way allows the aneurysm to be located without damage to vessels, as often happens when dissection is performed in the fresh state or after fixation.

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Discussion of "Application of the Microcomputer to Analytical Toxicology"

Dear Sir:

I have read with interest the article "Application of the Microcomputer to Analytical Toxicology" by Peel and Perrigo in the April 1981 issue (Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 352-357). I completely agree with the premise of the authors that the microcomputer is a valuable addition to the forensic laboratory. This is based upon my use of such a system over the past year and a half to do many of the same types of tasks, such as statistical analyses and search and retrieval of legal citations to forensic case work.

There is one point, however, which I feel is misleading and needs clarification. On page 353, the authors state, "All the microcomputers use BASIC language but have different cassette tape input systems. (This means that a cassette data/program is not interchangeable from one manufacturer's unit to another.)" This is factually incorrect. In most personal microcomputers of the types described, the BASIC language is present in read-only-memory (ROM) and the size of ROM may differ, thus allowing a greater or lesser number of commands to be handled. The actual BASIC language used is the product of the producer and differs from one manufacturer, who may contract with a software house to write a BASIC for his particular computer, to that used by a different computer manufacturer. As a point of interest, the BASIC used in the TRS-80 (Tandy) and the Apple were both written by the same software house, Microsoft, although they are structurally different and not interchangeable. This is partially due to the fact that a different microprocessor, the Z-80, is used in the TRS-80 whereas the Apple and the Commodore PET used by the authors utilize the 6502 microprocessor. There are actually two different BASIC languages available for the Apple: Integer BASIC, the older form, and a newer version, "Applesoft" (by Microsoft), and these are likewise not interchangeable; however, modifications are available to allow the use of both. If the reason for the lack of interchangeability were only in the cassette interface, it would be a relatively simple matter to modify the computer to accept programs written for a different system. Because the BASIC is, however, in ROM, this is not feasible. In

addition, if the authors' assumption were correct, the problem could be overcome by simply using disk storage rather than tape.

If the authors are interested in a side-by-side comparison of the BASIC used by six of the most widely used microcomputers, I recommend an excellent article by Teri Li, "Whose BASIC Does What," *Byte*, Jan. 1981, pp. 318-327.

I hope that this information will be of interest and may benefit an interesting and useful contribution to the *Journal*.

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