

11. A device as claimed in any one of claims 1, 5 or 8 wherein the detection system is an absorption imaging detection system that continuously monitors the progress of said focusing and the separation vessel is transparent.

12. A device as claimed in any one of claims 1, 5 or 8 wherein an inner wall of the vessel is coated with a substance to eliminate electroosmotic flow.

13. A device as claimed in claim 10 wherein the device is used to focus proteins and the inner wall is coated with poly(acrylamide).

14. A device as claimed in any one of claims 1, 5 or 8 wherein the vessel has an inlet and an outlet located so that buffer can flow continuously through said vessel in a direction normal to a longitudinal axis of said vessel, with collection devices located at said outlet to collect a focused part of the buffer.

15. A device as claimed in claim 1 wherein the vessel has two side walls that converge with one another so that the vessel has a V-shaped cross-section, with an inlet and outlet located so that buffer can flow into and out of said vessel continuously in a direction normal to said cross-section.

16. A device as claimed in claim 15 wherein there is at least one collector at the outlet to collect part of the buffer that has been focused.

17. A method of isoelectric focusing of ampholytes contained in a buffer using an elongated separation vessel with two ends, said vessel having an elongated tapered portion so that a temperature gradient is created longitudinally within contents of the vessel using a constant current from a power source, a power source and an imaging detection system arranged to monitor progress of said focusing, said method comprising the steps of filling the vessel with a buffer containing ampholytes, connecting the power source to create a temperature gradient longitudinally along said buffer in said vessel and to focus said ampholytes, activating said power source and monitoring the progress of said focusing using said detection system.

18. A method of isoelectric focusing of ampholytes contained in a buffer using an elongated separation vessel with two ends, said vessel having physical characteristics such that a temperature gradient is created longitudinally within contents of the vessel using a constant current from a power source, a power source and an imaging detection system arranged to monitor progress of said focusing, said method comprising the steps of filling the vessel with a buffer containing ampholytes, said vessel not containing any carrier ampholytes, connecting the power source to create a temperature gradient longitudinally along said buffer in said vessel, and monitoring the progress of said focusing using said detection system.

19. A method as claimed in claim 18 including the steps of connecting the power source to create a temperature gradient longitudinally along said buffer in said vessel and to focus said ampholytes, and activating said power source.

20. A method as claimed in any one of claims 17, 18 or 19 including the step of choosing a power source so that a voltage across the vessel is substantially 1 kV.

21. A method as claimed in any one of claims 17, 18 or 19, including the step of choosing the power source so that a voltage across the vessel ranges from 100 volts per cm of length to 1 kV per cm of length.

22. A method of fractionating ampholytic components of biological material contained in a buffer using an elongated separation vessel with two ends, said vessel having physical characteristics such that a temperature gradient is created longitudinally within contents of the vessel using a constant current generated by a power source having one terminal connected at one end of said vessel and the other terminal connected at the other end, there being a reservoir for the terminals at each end of the vessel, one of the reservoirs being a cathodic reservoir and the other reservoir being an anodic reservoir, there being several separate anodic reservoirs, the method comprising the steps of activating the current until all components of the buffer having a pI, which is low enough, pass through the vessel into a first anodic reservoir, replacing the first anodic reservoir with a second anodic reservoir and activating the system with a slightly lower current than that which was used with the first reservoir, thereby causing part of the ampholytes located by focusing at one end of the vessel and having a low enough pI to be charged negatively and to migrate into the second anodic container, replacing the second anodic container with a third anodic container and repeating the process with an even lower current to cause another part of the ampholytes located by focusing at one end of the vessel with a low enough pI to migrate into the third anodic container, continuing to repeat the process with successive anodic containers and successive reductions in current until sufficient fractions of ampholytic components are obtained.

23. A method as claimed in claim 22 wherein the vessel is a cone-shaped capillary having a tip at one end and the tip of the capillary is dipped into successive anodic containers.

24. A method as claimed in any one of claims 19 or 20 wherein the vessel has an elongated tapered portion that constitutes the physical characteristics.

25. A method as claimed in any one of claims 19 or 20 wherein the vessel has an elongated tapered portion that extends substantially from one end to the other to constitute said physical characteristics.

26. A method as claimed in any one of claims 19 or 20 wherein the vessel is a tapered capillary.

27. A method as claimed in any one of claims 19 or 20 wherein the vessel is a cone-shaped capillary.

28. A device as claimed in any one of claims 1, 2 or 3 wherein the vessel has an inlet at one end and an outlet at another end so that said buffer can flow through said vessel parallel to longitudinal axis of said vessel.

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