# What is a Microarray?





#### Introduction To: Discovering Genomic Variation Seminar Series

# What is a microarray?

- Microarrays (DNA chips) are glass slides with miniature grids of thousands of DNA probes
- DNA microarrays have revolutionised genomic studies - genome sequence resource
- Used to analyse genome variation (DNA & RNA) and the influence on gene function
- Different types of microarray used depending on the research question
- Typically interrogate thousands of DNA probes **USE...**in one experiment
- High-throughput "massively parallel" and cost effective

#### Before use ....



# Magnified image after use...

#### APPLICATIONS

- Differences (mutations and natural variation) in single DNA bases (SNP genotyping)
   Whole Genome Array CGH
  - Gene activity levels
- DNA amplification or loss (copy number variation)



Chromosome

 GENE FUNCTION - environmental interactions = risk factors for disease

# The Art of Hybridisation (1)

- Your Genome (animation)
- Microarrays rely on the nature of DNA
- Double-stranded molecule with complementary bases
- High temperature splits the strands apart (denaturation)
- At lower temperatures the complementary strands re-join (re-anneal)

# The Art of Hybridisation (2)

- Microarrays rely on the nature of DNA
- DNA spots are denatured and are singlestranded
- DNA/RNA sample for analysis is denatured
- Mixed together at the correct temperature
- DNA/RNA sample will re-anneal (hybridise) to the DNA spot - as long as sequences are complementary
- Use fluorescence and laser scanners to report the results

### **Typical Microarray Experiment**



**Arrayed probes** 

### **DNA Probe Attachment**

- Double-stranded DNA probe chemically bound to slide
- Robotically spotted onto surface
- Single-stranded probes can be made after attachment



### Hybridisation





### Laser Scanning

•2-laser system
•Confocal microscope
•Grey-scale TIFF images
•Spot-finding performed
using software
•Export raw data in excel
or CSV



#### Immune cells analysed in MDS patients



# Leukaemia Classification

#### Distinguish:

acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) acute myeloid leukemia (AML) Critical for successful treatment

#### Previously no single test sufficient to establish diagnosis



Golub et al. Science (1999) 286:531-7



#### **Spotted Arrays**



# Next-Generation Array Platforms-State of the Art



Illumina

•Massive improvement in scale, accuracy and reproducibility

# **Ethical Considerations**

- Microarray experiments generate unprecedented amounts of data
- Information about structure and function of an individual's genome
- Data release policy means data is freely available to all researchers (managed access)
- Anonymised ~ What should it be used for?

## In summary

- Millions of DNA probes in a microscopic grid
- Genome variation and influence on gene function
- High-throughput systematic studies
- Gene function and environmental interactions
- Technology continues to evolve
- Ethics
- yourgenome.org

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