Comparison of Two Quantitative Image Analysis Systems for Breast Cancer Immunohistochemistry
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ABSTRACT
Automated image analysis systems for breast cancer immunohistochemistry promise efficiency and reliability in the quantification of therapy targets such as the estrogen receptor (ER) or human epidermal growth factor receptor (Her2). Thomas Jefferson University Hospital owns two such systems, the Aperio ScanScope AT (Leica Biosystems) and Ventana iScan Coreo (Roche). A comparison study was performed to determine if choice of system affects target quantification and subsequent clinical tumor classification. Tumor expressions of ER, progesterone receptor (PR), proliferation marker Ki67, and Her2 were quantified with both systems for tissue samples from twenty breast cancer patients. Positive tumor classification was based on percent positivity values of ER >1%, PR >1%, Ki67 >10%, and Her2 score of 3+. Agreement for tumor classification was ER 100 (95% CI 83.2-100), PR 95 (75.1-99.9), Ki67 90 (68.3-98.8) and Her2 100 (83.2-100). While agreement was high, large variation was observed in percent positivity scores (ER, PR, Ki67, Her2).

INTRODUCTION
Targeted breast cancer therapies include endocrine therapies such as those targeting the estrogen receptor (ER) and immunotherapies such as those targeting the human epidermal growth factor receptor (Her2)1,2. Choice of therapy depends on target expression as quantified by immunohistochemistry (IHC). At Thomas Jefferson University Hospital (TJUH) all breast cancer tissue is stained for ER, PR, Ki67 and Her2. Tissue slides are imaged with specialized digital scanners and image analysis software is used to quantify target expression. Such software allows for an analysis of many more cells than could be reasonably achieved by a pathologist using a microscope. It can be used to improve inter-pathologist reliability and may be a solution to the problem of inconsistency across institutions1,2.

RESULTS
There was high classification agreement given boundary values of ER 1%, PR 1%, Ki67 10%, and Her2 3+. In the case of an upgrade or change in automated image analysis systems it is reasonable to compare the outputs of the two systems as an initial step in validating the new system. Complete validation should involve comparison to a pathologist’s manual interpretations. The present study compares an internally validated system from Aperio ePathology (Leica Biosystems, Wetzlar, Germany) consisting of the ScanScope AT scanner and ImageScope software to a newly acquired system from Ventana Medical Systems (Roche). A comparison study was performed to two such systems, the Aperio ScanScope AT (Leica Biosystems) and Ventana Benchmark XT following TJUH IHC staining protocols.

METHODS
Tissue sections were from core needle or excisional biopsies performed on twenty patients with invasive breast carcinoma between January 2013 and February 2014. Tissue sections were formalin fixed and paraffin embedded (10% buffered formalin for at least 6 hours and up to a maximum 72 hours for ER, PR, and Ki67 and 48 hours for Her2). Staining was accomplished with the Ventana Benchmark XT following TJUH IHC staining protocols. Sections were imaged with both scanners. A pathologist used ScanScope to select tumor regions appropriate for target quantification. Selection areas were mimicked in Ventana’s Virtuoso. Side by side monitors allowed for the mimicked selection areas to be hand drawn with a constant view of the ScanScope selection area.

Cell labeling in ImageScope (blue cells are negative) and Cell labeling in Virtuoso (green cells are negative)

CONCLUSIONS
Tumor classification agreement was high suggesting that choice of system has minimal effect on clinical decision making. Large variation in percent positivity scores may indicate suboptimal performance. Visual inspection of software post-analysis images shows that while the Aperio system tends to have minimal effect on clinical decision making. Large variation in percent positivity scores may indicate suboptimal performance. Visual inspection of software post-analysis images shows that while the Aperio system tends to have less variability in percent positivity scores.


1+ (incomplete staining of >10% cells), 2+ (incomplete or faint circumferential staining of >10% cells or intense circumferential staining of <10% cells) or 3+ (intense, complete circumferential staining of >10% cells). Score of 0 or 1+ gives a negative classification. A 2+ score is equivocal. Tumors with a 3+ score are positive and are treated with trastuzumab or lapatinib1,2.

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