Controlled odor mimic permeation systems for olfactory training and field-testing
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To whom it may concern,

Please find enclosed an original manuscript for consideration and peer review with *JoVE*. The manuscript, entitled **Controlled odor mimic permeation systems for olfactory training and field-testing**, discusses a low-cost and field-portable option for the controlled delivery of odors for olfactory testing and training. The Controlled Odor Mimic Permeation System (COMPS) was developed to provide a field-appropriate method of odor delivery at controlled and reproducible rates. The manuscript will discuss the preparation of the COMPS and ways to control the odor quantity released, as well as methods of analysis including gravimetric analysis and gas chromatography / mass spectrometry. We thank you in advance for your consideration of this manuscript.

Sincerely,

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1 **TITLE:**
2 **Controlled Odor Mimic Permeation Systems for Olfactory Training and Field Testing**
3

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24 **KEYWORDS:**
25 odor delivery, odor detection, olfaction, canine training, odor mimic, canine detection
26

27 **SUMMARY:**
28 The Controlled Odor Mimic Permeation System is a simple, field-portable, low-cost method of
29 odor delivery for olfactory testing and training. It is constructed of an odorant retained on an
30 adsorbent material and contained inside of a permeable polymer bag allowing controlled release
31 of the odorant vapor over time.
32
33 **ABSTRACT:**
34 The Controlled Odor Mimic Permeation System (COMPS) was developed to provide a convenient
35 field testing method of odor delivery at controlled and reproducible rates. COMPS are composed
36 of an odorant of interest on an absorbent material sealed inside of a permeable polymer bag.
37 The permeable layer allows for a constant release of the odorant over a given amount of time.
38 The permeable bag is further stored in a secondary, impermeable bag. The double-containment
39 procedure allows for equilibration of the odorant from the permeable bag but within the
40 impermeable outer layer, resulting in an instant and reproducible source of odorant vapor upon
41 removal from the outer packaging. COMPS are used in both olfactory testing for experimental
42 scenarios and for olfactory detection training, such as with detection canines. COMPS can be
43 used to contain a wide range of odorants (e.g., narcotics powders) and provide a controlled
44 release of the associated odorants. Odor availability from COMPS is expressed in terms of

45 permeation rate (i.e., the rate of the odorant vapor released from a COMPS per unit time) and is
46 typically measured by gravimetric means. The permeation rate for a given mass or volume of
47 odorant can be adjusted as needed by varying the bag thickness, surface area, and/or polymer
48 type. The available odor concentration from a COMPS can also be measured by headspace
49 analysis techniques such as solid phase microextraction with gas chromatography/mass
50 spectrometry (SPME-GC/MS).
51
52 **INTRODUCTION:**
53 Olfaction is a crucial, yet often overlooked, sensing mechanism used by most animals. For many
54 it is the main mechanism for locating food, finding a mate, or sensing danger[1]. Furthermore, the
55 olfactory capabilities some animals, most notably canines, are regularly exploited by humans for
56 the detection of contraband (e.g., narcotics or explosives), or other objects of interest, such as
57 missing persons, invasive species, or diseases[2,3]. For canine detection research or other olfaction
58 research topics, investigators often study the process of olfaction and the strengths and
59 limitations of the olfactory system. As such, it is generally desirable to control the release of an
60 odorant vapor into the environment to reproducibly deliver known quantities of odorant during
61 testing. Failure to account for variations in odor availability due to factors such as vapor pressure
62 or environmental effects often complicates data interpretation and applicability[4]. It is similarly
63 desirable to provide an established quantity of odor during training scenarios for detection
64 canines. For example, studies by Hallowell et al.[5] and by Papet[6] have indicated the importance of
65 odor intensity in odor perception, and that altering the intensity of an odorant can affect how it
66 is perceived alone or in a mixture.
67
68 In laboratory settings, the use of analytical equipment such as permeation tubes with
69 controllable ovens, vapor generators, or olfactometers may be used to control odor delivery.
70 However, this type of equipment is impractical for use during field testing and training scenarios[4].
71 The Controlled Odor Mimic Permeation System (COMPS) was developed as a simple, low-cost,
72 and disposable method for controlled odor delivery requiring no external power. Therefore, they
73 can easily be incorporated into a variety of different testing and training scenarios[7]. COMPS units
74 are simply composed of an odorant of interest on an absorbent material sealed inside of a
75 permeable polymer bag, stored in a secondary containment system. The utilization of COMPS
76 reduces variability between tests and improves consistency during training exercises[8].
77
78 Odor delivery or availability from COMPS is measured in terms of permeation rate, as determined
79 by gravimetric analysis in terms of mass of vapor released over time. Permeation rates can be
80 controlled by a number of factors, including the thickness of the polymer bag, its available surface
81 area, the type of absorbent material (substrate) used, and the amount of the odorant.
82 Permeation rate is constant for a given period of time (hours or days) depending on the odorant
83 being used. This allows for minimal variability in odor delivery during testing or training. During
84 storage, COMPS come to equilibrium within the impermeable outer container, resulting in an
85 instant source of odorant vapor at a known permeation rate.
86
87 COMPS were initially designed to contain odorants associated with explosive materials and to be
88 used as odor mimics[7]. As defined by Macias et al., an odor mimic simulates a material of interest,

89   such as an explosive, by providing the dominant volatile compounds, or odorants, found in the
90   headspace of that material without the presence of the parent material itself[8]. To create an odor
91   mimic, the active odorants of the parent material must be determined. An active odorant, in this
92   scenario, is described as a volatile compound that a trained explosive-detection canine detects,
93   believing that there is an actual explosive material present. Having identified dominant volatile
94   compounds in the headspace of several explosive materials, COMPS were prepared to release
95   these individual odorants at a controlled rate for the duration of canine olfactory detection field
96   trials and determine the active odorant associated with several explosive materials. COMPS were
97   successfully used for this purpose[7,9] and have since been used as odor mimics for further
98   explosive detection training.
99
100 Macias et al. utilized COMPS containing piperonal, a pure chemical solid at room temperature
101 that, in the vapor phase, has been shown to be the active odorant for MDMA (3,4-
102 methylenedioxymethamphetamine), the psychoactive drug known as ecstasy. The researchers
103 used varying thicknesses and surface areas of low-density polyethylene bags to adjust the
104 permeation rate of piperonal vapor. This series of COMPS was then used to estimate piperonal
105 detection threshold for trained narcotics-detection canines[8]. Conversely, in a separate study,
106 COMPS bag thicknesses were adjusted to minimize the deviation of permeation rates between
107 each compound in a homologous series though they possessed drastically varying vapor
108 pressures. If a single bag thickness had been used in this study, those compounds with higher
109 vapor pressures would have yielded much higher permeation rates. By increasing the bag
110 thickness for the higher volatility compounds, the permeations rates were adjusted so that they
111 were similar for all compounds[4]. Both studies demonstrate the utility and adaptability of the
112 COMPS to control vapor release. Similar studies optimizing polymer bag thickness as well as
113 absorbent material have been carried out in the creation of odor mimics for synthetic cathinones
114 (i.e., bath salts)[10], other narcotics (including heroin and marijuana[11]), and human odor
115 compounds[12,13]. In a final example, Simon et al. investigated the active odorants associated with
116 an invasive fungus species[14]. Whole pieces of infected tree bark, instead of the extracted
117 odorants, were placed directly into the polymer bag to control release during canine olfaction
118 testing[14]. COMPS can be utilized for a variety of scenarios, and the protocols discussed herein
119 were chosen to demonstrate the diversity of this tool.
120
121 **PROTOCOL:**
122
123 **1. Assembly of COMPS (Figure 1)**
124
125 1.1. For neat (liquid) compound on a substrate (**Figure 1A**)
126
127 1.1.1. To impregnate the substrate with odorant, use a calibrated pipette to add 5 µL of neat
128 compound to a 2 x 2 inch cotton gauze pad or other substrate of choice (see **Table of Materials**).
129
130 1.1.2. Fold the gauze pad in half and place this (or an alternative substrate material) into a 2 x 3
131 inch low-density polyethylene permeable bag. The suggested bag thicknesses are between 1 MIL,
132 for the fastest permeation rate, to 8 MIL, for a slower permeation rate.

133

134   NOTE: Variations in absorbent materials, permeable bag size, polymer chemistry, and thickness
135   can be used, but these changes affect the permeation rate of the odorants (see further discussion
136   in the Results Section).

137

138   1.1.3. ==Immediately seal the polymer bag closed with a heat sealer, eliminating as much air from==
139   ==within the bags as possible.==

140

141   1.1.4. Store the bag in an outer nonpermeable bag, or if it will be used immediately, place it in a
142   clean weigh boat in a fume hood (**Figure 1B**).

143

144   1.2. For solid material, no substrate necessary (**Figure 1C**)

145

146   1.2.1. Weigh the desired amount of solid material, which may be a pure compound or actual
147   target material, and place in a 2 x 3 inch low-density polyethylene (LDPE) permeable bag. Again,
148   the suggested bag thickness ranges from 1 MIL to 8 MIL.

149

150   1.2.2. Immediately heat-seal the polymer bag closed, eliminating as much air from within the bag
151   as possible, and store or set aside in a weigh boat.

152

153   **2. Gravimetric analysis to determine COMPS permeation rate**

154

155   NOTE: A constant ambient temperature is important for accurate and reproducible
156   measurements, both gravimetric and headspace. A constant temperature must be maintained
157   during all testing. It is recommended to carry out all analytical measurements at desired
158   temperatures during testing.

159

160   2.1. To determine the permeation rate of the odorants through the permeable bag, place a newly
161   made COMPS in a weigh boat inside of a fume hood.

162

163   2.2. Place a clean, separate weigh boat on an analytical balance, and zero the balance.

164

165   2.3. Remove the COMPS from the fume hood and place on the balance. Record the mass and
166   immediately return to the fume hood.

167

168   2.4. Continue recording the mass of the COMPS over regular time increments until the mass of
169   the COMPS no longer changes (±5%). At this point the odor from the COMPS is depleted.

170

171   2.5. As a negative control, create an empty COMPS consisting of just the substrate material
172   without odorants sealed into the permeable bag. Treat this negative control in the same manner
173   as the COMPS with odorant to ensure minimal fluctuations in mass over time.

174

175   2.6. Calculate the permeation rate from the COMPS.

176

177 2.6.1. Plot the mass of the COMPS versus time on an X-Y plot in appropriate statistical analysis
178 software.

180 2.6.2. Fit a linear trendline to just the linear portion of the graph and display an equation on a
181 chart. The trendline should NOT be set to include the origin. The slope of the line (i.e., m in y =
182 m+ b) is the permeation rate in mass per unit time.

184 **3. Headspace analysis by solid phase microextraction with gas chromatography/mass**
185 **spectrometry (SPME-GC/MS) (optional)**

187 3.1. Prepare a fresh COMPS following the instructions above and allow it to equilibrate in an open
188 weigh boat inside of a fume hood for 30 min.

190 3.2. Remove the COMPS from the weigh boat, place it into a 1 pint epoxy-lined metal sample
191 container without a lid, and put it into a 1 gallon epoxy-lined metal container. The containers
192 should be kept in a fume hood for the duration of the experiment.

194 3.3. Allow at least 30 min for equilibration in the container prior to sampling.

196 3.4. For sampling after equilibration, place a lid with a previously drilled 1 cm hole atop the outer
197 container. Insert an appropriate SPME fiber through the hole on the lid to extract the analyte of
198 interest. When the SPME fiber is not used, cover the hole with paraffin film or the like. The
199 extraction time and fiber coating will be dependent on the type and amount of analyte vapor
200 present, as well as the size of the sampling vessel and environmental conditions[15].

202 3.5. Remove the SPME fiber after the allotted extraction time and place in the heated inlet of a
203 GC/MS for thermal desorption and analysis.

205 3.5.1. Run the GC/MS method appropriate for the compound used in the COMPS[16].

207 3.6. For quantitation, compare the resulting peak area to an external calibration curve[16] and/or
208 internal standard[17] as appropriate for the method and experimental design.

210 NOTE: 1) In this example, epoxy-lined metal sample containers were used, but other types of
211 containers would also be suitable. To directly compare the odor availability to field olfactory
212 evaluations, it would be best to use the same container, cleaned between each test, for both
213 experiments; 2) For reproducible results, all aspects of the sampling procedure should be
214 maintained in all replicate experiments, including but not limited to equilibration time, SPME
215 extraction time, container type and size, and environmental conditions (i.e., temperature and
216 humidity).

218 **4. COMPS storage**

220 4.1. Place a single COMPS in a metalized barrier bag (3.5 x 4.5 inch) and heat-seal to close,

221 removing as much air as possible from the bag prior to sealing (**Figure 1B**).

223 4.2. Store in cool ambient or refrigerated conditions but not below or close to freezing to avoid
224 the formation of condensation as the COMPS thaws.

226 4.3. If testing multiple odorants or odorant delivery rates in a single experiment, secondary
227 containment is recommended to eliminate any possible cross contamination during
228 transportation and storage.

230 4.3.1. Place replicate multiple barrier bags each containing individual COMPS of the same analyte
231 and permeation rate in an outer, larger metalized bag or glass jar for storage and transport.

233 **5. Field olfactory testing**

235 NOTE: Olfactory testing can be carried out in many different ways depending on the animal being
236 tested, the goal of the experiment, and the environmental conditions. The protocol below
237 describes one such manner of testing. All animal testing should first be reviewed and approved
238 by an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

240 5.1. First, create blank or negative control COMPS as described above. Make enough so every
241 container in the testing scenario will contain spare COMPS (2–3 depending on the number of
242 animals involved in the experiment). Package all blank COMPS together in secondary
243 containment (i.e., a larger metalized bag or glass jar with sealing lid).

245 5.2. Create fresh COMPS as needed for the intended field test protocol. Eliminate all possible
246 sources of contamination between the COMPS and the metalized bag. This can be accomplished
247 by regular changing of gloves and cleaning of the laboratory work surface.

249 5.3. Store the COMPS for at least 1 day prior to use to allow for equilibration. Store any replicates
250 in the same secondary container. However, different COMPS should be in separate secondary
251 containers.

253 5.4. To set up a basic canine olfactory test, lay out multiple lines of at least five identical
254 containers (e.g., metal cans, boxes), with the number of lines dependent on the number of
255 variables being tested.

257 5.4.1. Set up the trial so that each line contains one container with the target COMPS and four
258 with blank COMPS. Positive control lines, prepared in the same manner but with a known target
259 odor, may be used as appropriate for the experiment, training, or testing scenario. An additional
260 negative control or blank line should contain five blank COMPS and no targets. Order this
261 negative control line, positive control line (if using), and testing lines at random, and change order
262 using a random number generator for each canine olfactory test as practical for the testing
263 scenario.

5.4.1.1. Include one distractor odorant/material per line as well.

266

267 5.4.1.2. Randomize the order and location of the target and distractor odorants in each line for
268 each canine being tested using a random number generator.

269

270 5.5. To prepare the containers, remove COMPS from the secondary and outer containers, placing
271 only the permeable bag in the trial container.

272

273 5.5.1. Allow the COMPS to equilibrate in the container for a minimum of 30 min prior to testing.

274

275 5.5.2. Repeat steps for each COMPS being used in the test, starting with blanks, followed by
276 positive controls (if using), and then testing odorants, changing gloves each time.

277

278 NOTE: Detailed examples of canine testing scenarios can be found in Simon et al.[4] or Macias et
279 al.[8].

280

281 **REPRESENTATIVE RESULTS:**
282 The primary objective of using COMPS in olfactory testing/training is to control the release of the
283 chosen odorants and deliver a controlled amount of the odorant over the duration of the test or
284 training session. Odorant release is measured by gravimetric analysis in terms of mass loss per
285 unit time. **Figure 2** gives an example of gravimetric results from the permeation of three identical
286 COMPS prepared from 5 μL of pentanoic acid on cotton gauze through a 3 MIL LDPE bag. A line
287 of regression was added to the graph, and the slope of the line represents the permeation rate
288 of 37 μg/min for this set of COMPS.

289

290 It is often desirable to be able to adjust the amount of odorant released for a given test. This can
291 be done in several ways, including adjusting the amount of material in the bag, the surface area
292 of the permeable bag material, or the bag thickness. **Figure 3** shows how all three of these factors
293 were used to control the release of piperonal. **Figure 3A** indicates a logarithmic relationship
294 between the mass in piperonal in the permeable bag (3 x 3 inch, 2 MIL LDPE), where the
295 permeation rate increased quickly at the lower masses, then slowed after 500 mg due to physical
296 restriction in the amount of odorant that could be released from the given bag at a time. The
297 data in **Figure 3B** depict a linear relationship between permeation rate and surface area of the
298 permeable bag for 2 g of piperonal in a 2 MIL LDPE bag. Finally, permeation rate decreased
299 linearly with increased bag thickness (2 g of piperonal in a 3 x 3 inch bag), as shown in **Figure 3C**,
300 because the thicker bag restricts and slows emission.

301

302 In another example of the utility of controlling permeation rates, Simon et al.[4] used bag thickness
303 to standardize permeation rates for compounds of varying vapor pressures in order to present
304 canines with similar odorant availability for each analyte during field testing. A volume of 5 μLs
305 of each neat analyte was pipetted onto separate cotton gauze pads and placed into 2 x 3 inch
306 LDPE permeable bags. The permeation rates were measured by gravimetric analysis. **Figure 4**
307 shows the variation in vapor pressures (**Figure 4A**) across the groups of analytes (RSD = 138%)
308 compared to the variation in permeation rate after adjusting the bag thickness (**Figure 4B**) to

309   control the rate and make them as similar as possible (RSD = 31.8%). Furthermore, adjusting the
310   bag thickness allowed permeation rates to vary by three orders of magnitude (**Table 1**).
311
312   Headspace measurements can be used to better measure the amount of odorant available during
313   a given testing or training scenario. Macias[18] measured the amount of piperonal in the headspace
314   of three COMPS with permeation rates of 1,000, 100, and 10 ng/min (**Figure 5**). The COMPS were
315   placed in a 1 quart sampling can, and the headspace was extracted for 30 min using SPME. The
316   resulting chromatograph in **Figure 5** shows the piperonal peak areas increasing with increasing
317   permeation rate[18].
318
319   Macias then used these three sets of piperonal COMPS in canine trials. Trained narcotics
320   detection canines were tested on the 0 (blank), 10, 100, and 1,000 ng/s piperonal COMPS in a
321   scent cage (**Table 2**). The results showed that as the permeation rate, and thus odor availability,
322   increased the number of canines alerting to the appropriate COMPS increased[18].
323
324   **FIGURE AND TABLE LEGENDS:**
325   **Figure 1: Examples of COMPS.** (**A**) A COMPS constructed from a cotton gauze pad in permeable
326   polymer bag. Reproduced from Simon et al.[4] (**B**) A COMPS inserted into an outer impermeable
327   bag. (**C**) A COMPS containing infected wood as an odor source in a polymer bag. Figures **B** and **C**
328   were reproduced with permission from Simon et al.[19]

329   **Figure 2: Example measurement of permeation rate by gravimetric analysis.** The mass loss of
330   the analyte (i.e., pentanoic acid) on gauze through a 3 MIL LDPE bag measured over time. **A**, **B**,
331   and **C** indicate replicates of the same material, while "Average" is the averaged value of the three
332   at each time point. The given equation describes the linear fit to the average data.

333   **Figure 3: Examples of factors adjusting the permeation rate.** Graphs of piperonal dissipation
334   indicate experimentally measured permeation rates when changing (**A**) the mass of piperonal (3
335   x 3 inch, 2 MIL LDPE bag), (**B**) the surface area of the permeable bag (2 g of piperonal, 2 MIL
336   LDPE), and (**C**) the bag thickness (2 g of piperonal, 3 x 3 inch bag). All error bars represent one
337   standard deviation of the mean (some bars are within the size of the marker). These figures have
338   been reproduced with permission from Macias et al.[18]

339   **Figure 4: Comparison of vapor pressure variation across a group of compounds versus**
340   **permeation rate variation.** (**A**) Vapor pressures for a selection of 12 compounds (RSD = 138%)
341   compared to (**B**) permeation rates for the same compounds with selected COMPS thicknesses
342   (RSD = 31.8%). Numbers in parentheses represent LDPE bag thickness in MIL. These figures have
343   been reproduced with permission from Simon et al.[4]

344   **Figure 5: Headspace analysis of piperonal COMPS at three permeation rates.** Overlaid
345   chromatograms of the headspace components of piperonal COMPS adjusted to permeation rates
346   of 1,000, 100, and 10 ng/s. Reproduced with permission from Macias et al.[18]

347   **Table 1: Permeation rate versus bag thickness.** Permeation rate of methyl benzoate on cotton
348   gauze in COMPS of varying bag thicknesses. Note that the lowest permeation rate was achieved

349 by placing a 4 MIL COMPS inside of a metalized bag with a 1/8 in hole. The R^2 value indicates the
350 fit of the line to the gravimetric plot.

351 **Table 2: Example of canine field trial results.** Canine responses to piperonal COMPS with
352 permeation rates ranging from 0–1,000 ng/s. Reproduced with permission from Macias et al.[18].
353

354 **DISCUSSION:**
355 Controlled Odor Mimic Permeation Systems (COMPS) are easily created by sealing an odorant of
356 interest into a permeable bag. This may be done by pipetting a neat liquid compound onto an
357 absorbent material and then placing the absorbent material into the bag; by placing a pure, solid
358 compound directly into the bag[4], as was done in the case of piperonal[8]; or by placing the target
359 material containing multiple or unknown odorants into a permeable bag, as was done with
360 fungus-infected wood[14]. The permeable bag controls the release of the odorant so a known and
361 reproducible amount can be delivered over a given training or testing period. Permeation rate is
362 typically measured by gravimetric analysis, plotting mass loss over time, and can be adjusted by
363 altering a number of parameters, including the absorbent material, the mass/volume of odorant,
364 or parameters of the permeation bag (i.e. thickness, surface area, or polymer type). COMPS are
365 stored in an outer nonpermeable envelope, which allows the COMPS to equilibrate prior to use,
366 thus providing a known amount of odorant immediately upon use.
367

368 The greater the permeation rate of a COMPS, the greater concentration of odorant available
369 during a training or testing scenario. To quantitate or compare the odor concentration emitted
370 from a COMPS, headspace analysis of the COMPS in the testing/training container should be
371 completed. This is most often done by extracting the odor using SPME with analysis by GC/MS.
372 For quantitation or comparison purposes, it is recommended to use an internal standard and/or
373 an external calibration curve.
374

375 COMPS serve as a low-cost, field-amenable devices for controlling the release of an odorant for
376 olfactory training or testing, such as with canine detectors. COMPS can be used repeatedly until
377 depletion, each time delivering the same odorant emission rate, although the length of time the
378 emission rate is constant will change for each analyte and should be tested in the laboratory prior
379 to use. This overcomes a widely recognized limitation of controlling odor delivery for field use
380 and advances olfaction research and detection animal training.
381

389

390 **DISCLOSURES:**
391 No conflicts of interest to report.

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441   2017.
442

Table 1

Bag thickness	Permeation rate (mg/min)	R-squared
1 MIL	0.108	0.974
4 MIL	0.042	0.991
8 MIL	0.00499	0.99
4 MIL in metal b	0.000179	0.972

Table 2

Piperonal COMPS permeation rate	Number of alerts	% alert
0 ng/s (blank)	0	0%
10 ng/s	4	25%
100 ng/s	7	44%
1000 ng/s	12	75%

| Piperonal COMPS permeation rate | Number | |

Name of Material/ Equipment	Company	Catalog Number	Comments/Description
16 oz economy jars (70-450 finish)	Fillmore container	A16-08C-Case 12	
7890A gas chromatograph / 5975 mass selective detector	Agilent		
Analytical balance	Mettler Toledo	01-911-005	
Ball regualr bands and dome lids	Fillmore container	J30000	
Cotton gauze (2" x 2")	Dukal		
Disposable weighing boats	VWR	10803-148	
Epoxy-lined sample containers, 1 gallon	TriTech Forensics	CANG-E	
Epoxy-lined sample containers, 1 pint	TriTech Forensics	CANPT-E	
Low density polyetheylene bag	Uline	S-5373	
Rtx-Volatiles (30 m x 0.32 mmID) column	Restek	10901	
Silver metalized mylar barrier bag (3.5" x 4.5")	ESP Packaging	95509993779	
Silver metalized mylar barrier bag (5" x 8.5" x 3")	ESP Packaging	95509993793	
Solid phase microextration fiber assembly (PDMS/DVB/CAR)	Sigma-Aldrich	57328-U	
Solid phase microextration holder	Sigma-Aldrich	57330-U	
Tabletop Impulse Sealer	Uline	H-190	Heat sealer

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9. Please revise the Discussion to explicitly cover the following in detail in 3-6 paragraphs with citations:
   a) Critical steps within the protocol Already included in first and second paragraphs.
   b) Any modifications and troubleshooting of the technique Options for COMPS creation included in first paragraph.
   c) Any limitations of the technique Additional sentence added the last paragraph.
   d) The significance with respect to existing methods Included in final paragraph.
   e) Any future applications of the technique Not relevant.

10. All tables should be uploaded separately to your Editorial Manager account in the form of an .xls or .xlsx file. Complete

11. Please sort the items in alphabetical order according to the name of material/equipment. Complete

Reviewers' comments:
Reviewer #1:

Overall, I found this manuscript a good overview and description of the use of COMPS for canine testing. I think it will have several uses for a variety of scientists and canine handlers as well. I am happy to see this move forward.

I only have a few minor comments:

Line 107- not a clear description of the study. I think a little too brief for those not familiar with the recent paper. An additional sentences describing the findings were added.

Line 157- should there be any control for temperature? Temperature effects are generally not noted throughout. This is a good point. A note was added in regards to handling temperature.

Line 188- the description here is confusing. The video should correct that, but a little more clarity as to whether you are replacing the lid, or whether you are using a lid that can be pierced or plugged when the hole is not needed? Additional information was added.

Line 255- I wouldn't recommend making the second search always an all blank search. Over time, dogs will readily learn the second search is blank and will stop attending to that search. It should be random as to whether the first or second search doesn't contain the target. The authors agree. This was misstated in the text and not the authors' intention. This was rephrased for clarity.

Reviewer #2: No changes requested.
Manuscript Summary:
This manuscript describes the process used by "COMPS" to make controlled odor release systems to be used in experiments and training. It discusses this system for odor as a liquid placed on material, as well as solids. Authors discussed clearly how to measure the rate of the dissipation of the odor and how to vary the rate for different targets, if wanted or needed. The manuscript specifically discusses its use with canines, however, any odor detection research could use this system. The methods appear to be sufficient for someone to repeat and use this method in their odor detection research. Their COMPS system is backed up by other research, cited and briefly discussed in the manuscript.

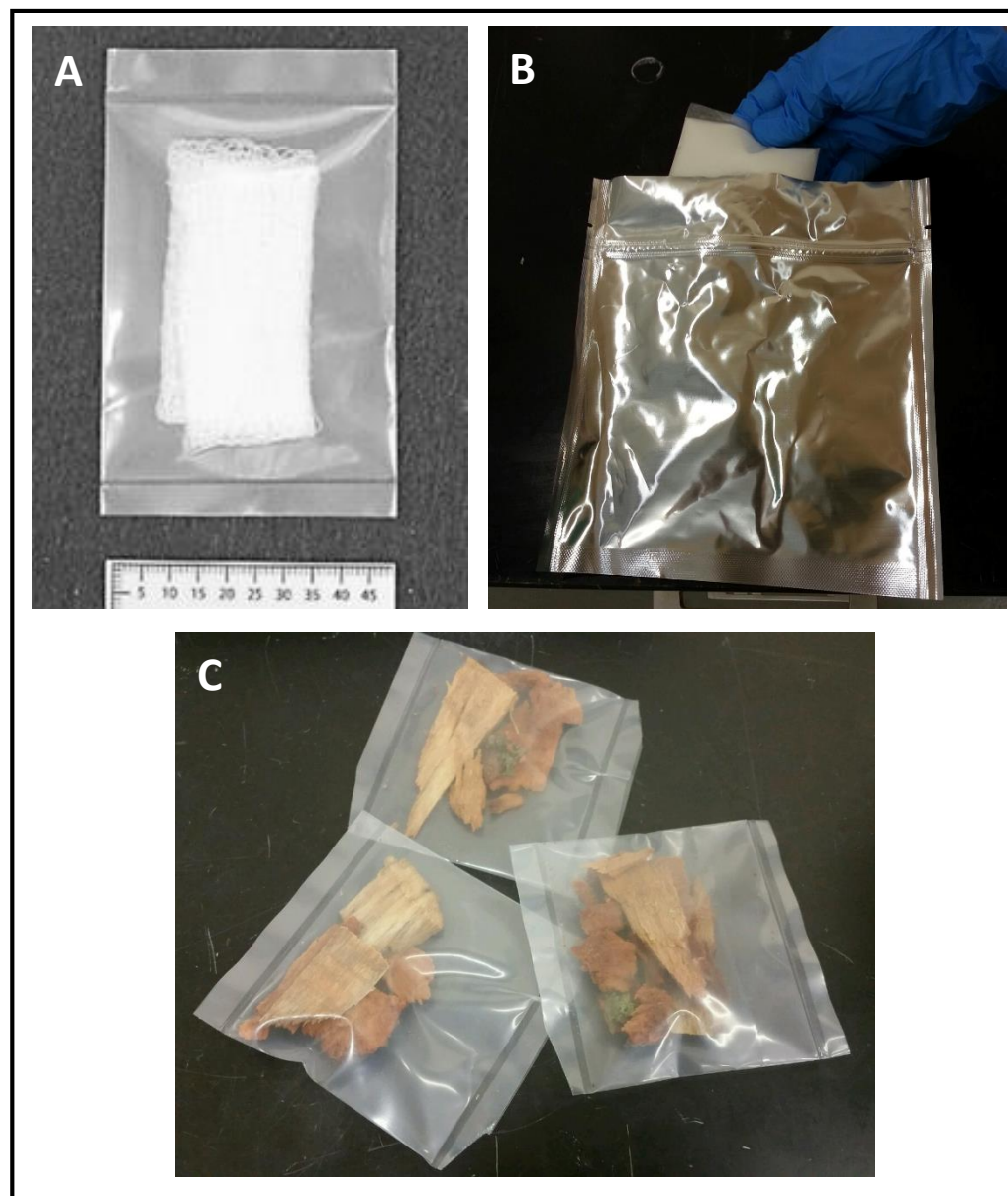Major Concerns:
None

Minor Concerns:
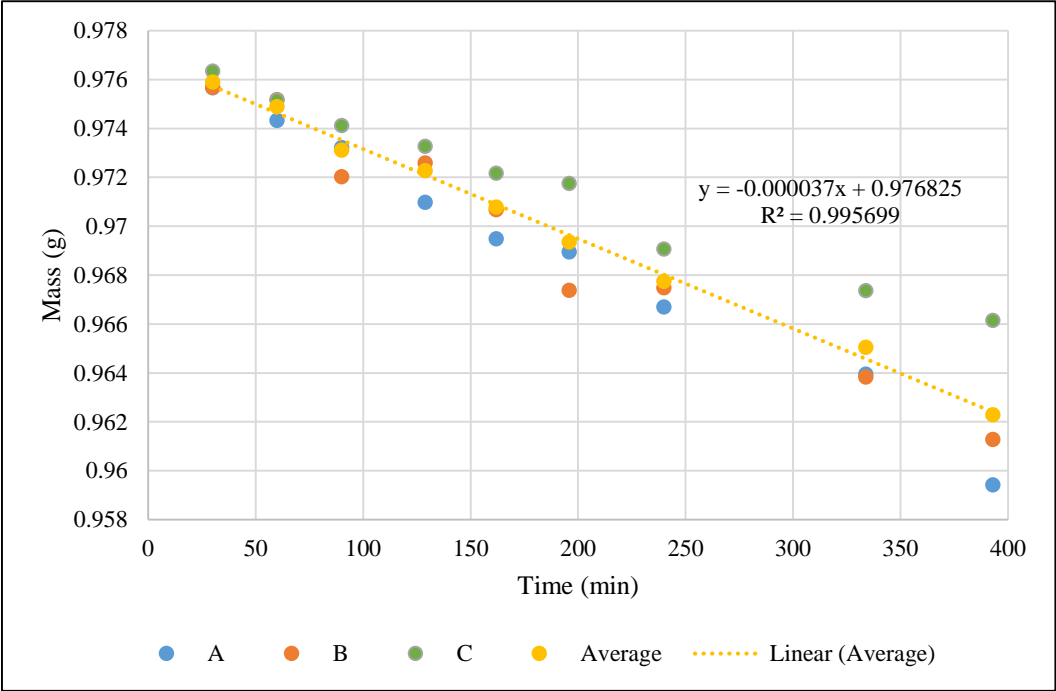None

Figure 1.

Figure 2.

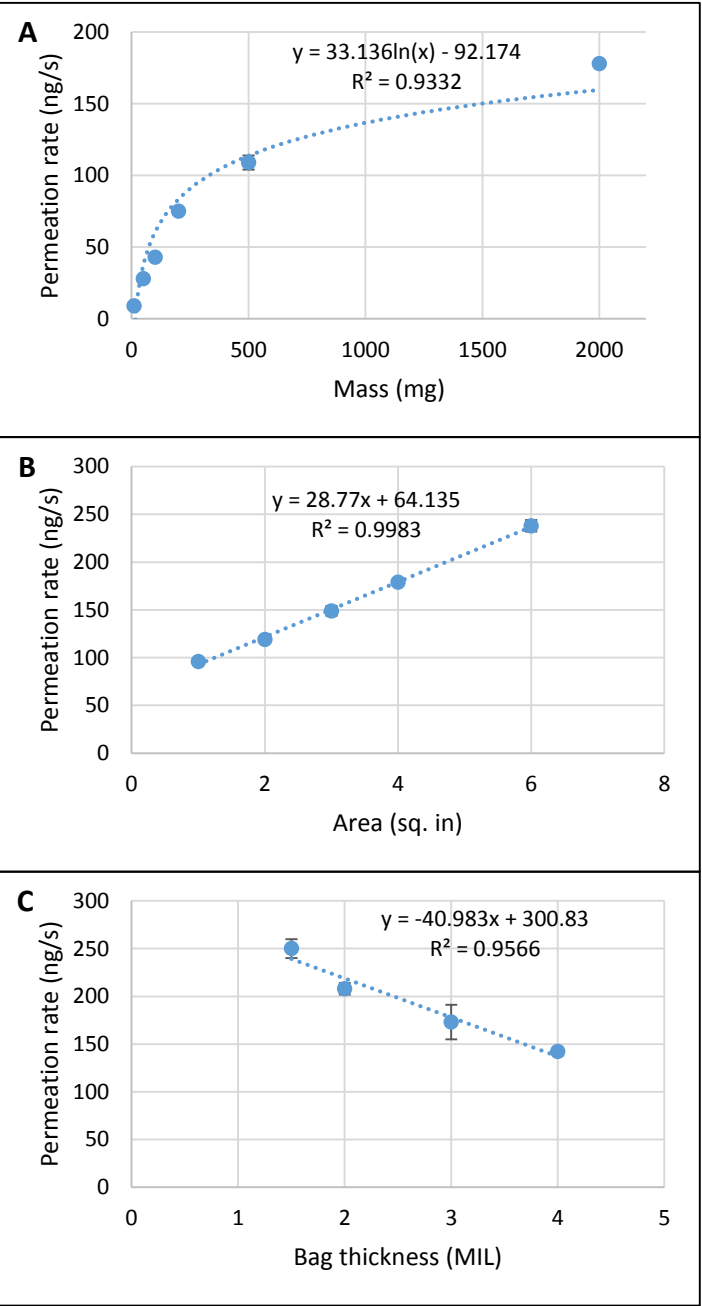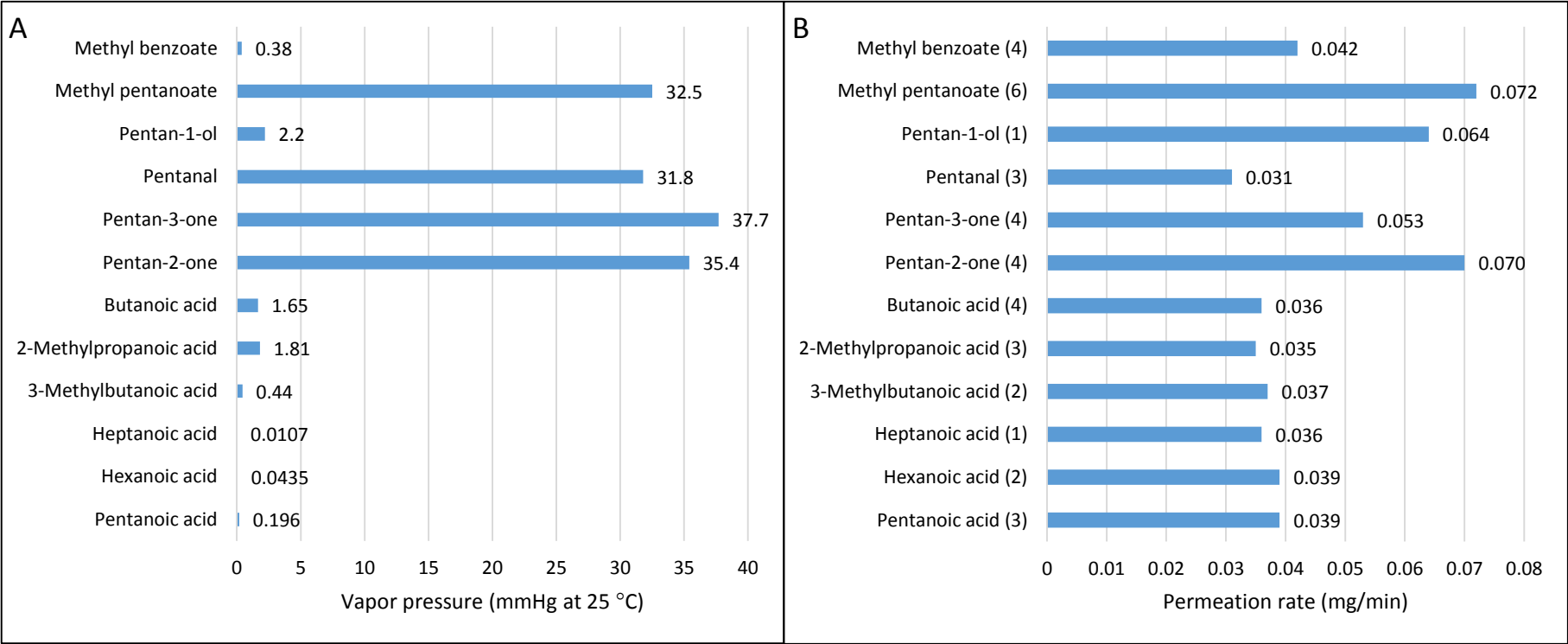Mass (g) vs Time (min) scatter plot with linear trend line.

$y = -0.000037x + 0.976825$
$R^2 = 0.995699$

Legend: A, B, C, Average, Linear (Average)

Figure 3.

A
y = 33.136ln(x) - 92.174
R^2 = 0.9332

Permeation rate (ng/s)

Mass (mg)

B
y = 28.77x + 64.135
R^2 = 0.9983

Permeation rate (ng/s)

Area (sq. in)

C
y = -40.983x + 300.83
R^2 = 0.9566

Permeation rate (ng/s)

Bag thickness (MIL)

Figure 4.

A — Vapor pressure (mmHg at 25 °C)

Compound	Value
Methyl benzoate	0.38
Methyl pentanoate	32.5
Pentan-1-ol	2.2
Pentanal	31.8
Pentan-3-one	37.7
Pentan-2-one	35.4
Butanoic acid	1.65
2-Methylpropanoic acid	1.81
3-Methylbutanoic acid	0.44
Heptanoic acid	0.0107
Hexanoic acid	0.0435
Pentanoic acid	0.196

B — Permeation rate (mg/min)

Compound	Value
Methyl benzoate (4)	0.042
Methyl pentanoate (6)	0.072
Pentan-1-ol (1)	0.064
Pentanal (3)	0.031
Pentan-3-one (4)	0.053
Pentan-2-one (4)	0.070
Butanoic acid (4)	0.036
2-Methylpropanoic acid (3)	0.035
3-Methylbutanoic acid (2)	0.037
Heptanoic acid (1)	0.036
Hexanoic acid (2)	0.039
Pentanoic acid (3)	0.039

Figure 5.

Table 1.

Bag thickness	Permeation rate (mg/min)	R-squared
1 MIL	0.108	0.974
4 MIL	0.042	0.991
8 MIL	0.00499	0.990
4 MIL in metal bag w/ 1/8" hole	0.000179	0.972

Table 2.

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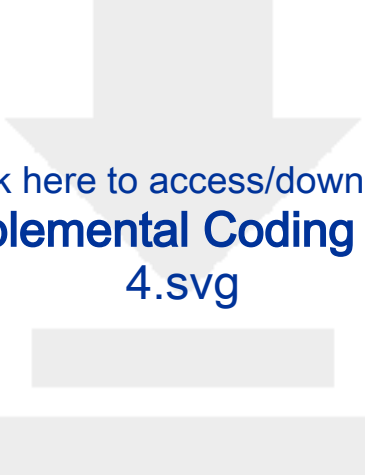T 202.767.4256
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