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Fluorescence-Based **Determination of Olive** **Quality** Using an Endoscopic Smart Mobile Spectrofluorimeter

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Abstract—The application of self-contained field-portable, internet connected spectroscopic diagnostics in food analysis using a fibre endoscopic smart fluorimeter is reported. A UV-induced fluorescence measure of the quality of olives oils, distinguishing between extra virgin and others, is identified and demonstrated with a smartphone platform. When excited at $\lambda \sim 370$ nm, the extra virgin olive oil fluoresces red at $\lambda \sim 670$ nm. Notably, other oils do not fluoresce red but rather blue, consistent with degradation of the chlorophyll in the oil. Artificial refinement employed in some of the commercial products removes the red emission providing a simple method for distinguishing extra virgin olive oil from all other oils. A smartphone endoscopic fluorimeter is designed and constructed that measures the emission band $\Delta\lambda \sim (400 - 700)$ nm with $\lambda \sim 370$ nm excitation. The instrument is used to characterise the fluorescence of the oils. Photo-degradation over time for extra virgin olive oil under room lights is observed, demonstrating the origin for the decomposition of extra virgin olive oil in transparent bottles. Extra virgin olive oils are also susceptible to thermally degrade more than refined oils.

Index Terms—Lab-in-a-phone, smartphone spectrometer, optical fibre spectrometer, fluorescence, food sensing, olive oil, extra virgin olive oil, photo-degradation, thermal degradation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Global trade means quality assurance of food stuffs is increasingly a global concern. The mechanism and standards in developed countries are being challenged by the logistical reach required to ensure integrous supply to other regions. Confidence in knowing where food originates and the standards surrounding their growth, identification and transport is a global driver for the purchase of food from countries like Australia and New Zealand. It is being undermined by substantive failures in monitoring and law enforcement over both fake food products and rebranding of genuine foodstuffs outside the legal jurisdictions of developed countries. Australia and New Zealand enjoy a high international reputation for food quality and Australian farming produce, from meat, dairy and vegetable to more gourmet products, arguably the most sought after in the world. Organic food production in particular is enjoying heightened interest ironically in part driven by the

explosive growth in fake food products in developing countries with growing middle class incomes, such as China, Indonesia and India. Maintaining this reputation and ensuring standards are met and are traceable requires new global standards and reach. Technology around the Internet-of-Things (IoT) can enable this by ensuring replicable global monitoring and diagnostics through new accredited internet distribution channels from the farm, to the distribution ports and retailers and finally the end consumer, irrespective of where they are. Whilst both the network and food standards have to be global in reach, this technology has to be locally field-portable, accessible and easy to use as well as directly and robustly linked to the global network. This changing and increasingly global internet based distribution model supported by new technology requires new quality assurance models that provide data and identification in real time and on-line supported by international bodies. Smart device based technology will underpin this new international era [1]; [2].

Among various dietary foods of global gourmet value, vegetable oils such as olive oils are the most commonly sought. As well as simply identifying the source of these foods to verify the level of quality, concerns have been raised of prevalent fake oil distribution passed off as extra virgin olive (EVO) oil [3]. EVO oil is one of a few genuine sources of monounsaturated fatty acids, vitamin E and chlorophyll (Chl) [4], attributed to healthy eating and a key ingredient of the Mediterranean diet associated as being optimal for human consumption [5], [6]. EVO oil is cold pressed to preserve its natural ingredients with minimal degradation involved, commanding premium prices. However, some EVO oils, including fake products, as well as refined olive (RO) oil products, have characteristics and chemical composition that are difficult to detect with simple visual inspection. These degraded products can instead have highly oxidative molecules that can create adverse health effects if consumed too often [7]. Clearly, there is a specific need for instrumentation that can measure and corroborate acceptable focus on olive oils and demonstrate novel smart device technology to address this challenge. In doing so, we show how such technology forms the basis for a new approach

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for light propagation, collection and dispersion. The position and alignment of each component has been determined by optical design and a custom designed smartphone app runs the fluorescence measurements. A schematic of the design and operation is illustrated in Fig. 1.

A. Endoscopic fluorimeter design and fabrication

The optical layout and 3D design of the endoscopic mobile fluorimeter are shown in Fig. 1(a) and (b) respectively. The fluorescence excitation sources are ultra-violet (UV) LEDs (Model No. FD-50TW20, $\lambda_{exc} = 370$ nm, $\Delta\lambda_{3dB} = 30$ nm), powered from the smartphone (Samsung Galaxy S4, Model 19500, Octa-core CPU, 1080x1920 pixels AMOLED display, 13 MP rear camera and 2600 mAh battery) via its micro USB port that can deliver a maximum of 500 mA current at 5 V. A flexible fibre bundle probe (Edmund Optics, FiberScope, $L = 60$ cm) integrated into the smartphone captures fluorescence and avoids ambient illumination. The fibre bundle probe consists of two sets of fibres: illumination and collection fibres. The illumination fibres are assembled inside the bundle probe to transmit light from the source to the sample. Fluorescence is collected at the collection fibre bundle centre of the endoscope; a microscope objective, in-built at the end of the fibre bundle, increases light collection. To avoid UV degradation of the endoscope fibres, instead of sending the light through the illumination fibres, three UV LEDs are placed at the end of the endoscope near the sample. A customised cap fitting holds the LEDs with wires wound around the endoscope. These parallel connected LEDs are evenly spaced to uniformly illuminate the sample surface. A series resistor ($R = 22 \Omega$, $P = 2$ W) limits current to the LEDs. To ensure a constant distance of the sample from the endoscope, the cap periphery is extended further, $l = 1.0$ cm. The collected light at the receiver end is collimated and dispersed onto the smartphone camera using a low-cost, but somewhat inefficient, digital versatile disc (DVD) as a diffraction grating (Philips, $G \sim 722$ lines/mm). An emission slit, $w = 0.7$ mm determines the spectral resolution obtained ($\Delta\lambda = 2.0$ nm) [44]. The resolution can be improved further by using a slit of lower w , but sacrificing the light intensity reaching to the detector. A cylindrical lens (Edmund Optics, $f_c = 25$ mm, $d = 25$ mm) is also used to improve light collection per pixel onto the detector. Both the cap and the spectrometer package for a smartphone are designed on AutoCAD and prototyped on a fused deposition modeling (FDM) based 3D printer (Zortrax, M200) using low-cost ABS plastic (Fig. 1(c)).

B. Application software (app)

A customized smartphone application (app) is developed in Android platform. It performs all measurements and allows ready sharing of the data as well as archiving into the cloud. The smartphone app consists of two functional screens – one for imaging the diffracted light and the other for plotting spectrum as intensity versus wavelength (I vs λ). In order to produce accurate spectrum that is comparable to the standard spectrometer, the diffraction image is calibrated by considering both wavelength and intensity distribution across each pixel. A

detail of the step-by-step calibration procedure is discussed in [2], [44]. To clean the spectra, the intensity was calculated after averaging the value from a width of 15 pixels. The plotted spectra can be used to identify and monitor a particular emission band in real-time. For example, the level of Chl- a can be known directly by looking at the red emission band [19]. After selecting from the menu option the app allows the user to find ratios of different emission bands and identify correlation between them. This is useful to classify different oils from a known function of calibrated co-efficient. The measurement report can be displayed on the mobile screen or archived in time and location (GPS) either to the smartphone memory or to a cloud service or computer server via the Internet.

C. Device operation

The fiber bundle probe is flexible enough for endoscopic operation making the mobile spectrofluorimeter smarter and user-friendly for hand-held and field-portable operation. In order to avoid the effect of container material on fluorescence emission, firstly, a 20 mL of oil sample is transferred to clear glass vials (21 mL) as shown in Fig. 2(a). In the second step, the user needs to put the fiber bundle cap end against the surface of the glass vial and run the mobile app following the instruction provided inside the app. By running app, it allows the user to capture the image of the fluorescence and plot the diffracted light as a spectrum. Analysis of sample in the second screen of the app allows the user to identify the type and grade of the oil samples by selecting and automatically comparing intensities at different wavelengths. The results of each oil sample can be stored in the phone's local storage as well as shared to others.

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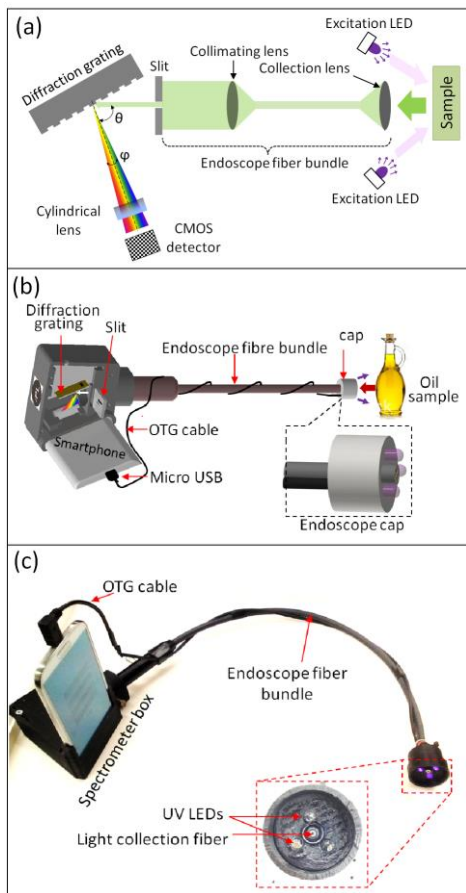


Fig. 1. Configuration of the smartphone endoscope spectrofluorimeter. (a) Optical layout; (b) 3D AutoCAD 3D design of the fluorimeter and (c) the 3D-printed version of the fluorimeter installed on a smartphone [2].

IV. ANALYSIS OF OLIVE OILS

A. Samples

Table 3.1: Comparison of fluorescence intensities measured at 452 and 670 nm for different types of olive oils.

Oil type	I_{452} (a. u.)	I_{670} (a. u.)
Extra virgin olive	4.2 ± 1.0	18.4 ± 0.8
Refined olive	24.5 ± 1.5	0.8 ± 0.7
Canola	47.7 ± 2.5	0.7 ± 0.5
Peanut	19.6 ± 1.2	1.1 ± 0.7
Rice bran	38.1 ± 2.6	1.1 ± 0.6
Sunflower	29.7 ± 0.9	1.1 ± 0.7

Vegetable oils of different types were collected from a local

supermarket. The oil samples include EVO (two different brands), RO, canola, peanut, rice bran and sunflower oils. Amongst them, olive oil is of the particular preference to consumers due to its health benefits such as protection against strokes, osteoporosis, diabetes, Alzheimer's and many others [49]. Olive oil is also considered as a strong source of monounsaturated fatty acid which naturally comes from the olive fruit when the oil is pressed.

Both the physical and chemical properties are important to characterize an oil type. Flavor and colour is considered as key physical indication of good oil. The flavor range from mild to very strong and appearance vary upon the presence of carotenoid and chlorophyll derivatives. Chemically the oil is classified based on the presence of acidity and the process involved in oil extraction. The olive oil which is graded as "virgin" is usually cold pressed – a mechanical process that involves no heat and contains a very low level of acidity (less than 2%). This grade of olive oil comes from the first pressing of the olives therefore preserves most of its natural constituents including the vitamins (A, B₂, K, D and E) and photochemicals [49]. In another grade of olive oil that uses heat and chemicals to press the olive residue subsequently is labeled as "pure" or "refined" oil. The oils labeled as "extra virgin" must be free from refined oils and contains much higher degree of potent items, which worth a premium price.

B. Olive oil classifications

A vegetable oil of particular brand have its unique properties, specific uses and customer preferences but most do not offer the health benefits attributed to olive oil. Some are instead considered detrimental with long periods of use. The noticeable variations among the suppliers makes visual inspection and classification extremely difficult, worsened when chemicals such as chlorophylls are introduced artificially. To identify the unique characteristic of each vegetable oil that arises from its constituent chemicals, fluorescence spectra of each sample were measured. To excite and collect the fluorescence emission, the fibre bundle probe is butted against the side wall of the glass vial containing the oil sample. This way of sample placement allows the instrument collecting the front-face fluorescence of sample and therefore, reducing self-absorption by the oil [50].

From the measurement of emission spectra (Fig. 3), distinctive fluorescence emissions were observed between the olive oil and all other vegetable oils. In particular, significantly weaker blue emission at $\lambda_{em} \sim (452 \pm 40)$ nm and strong red emission at $\lambda \sim (670 \pm 20)$ nm, which correspond to oxidation and Chl-*a* compounds [19] in olive, are found in virgin oil as compared to the refined and other oil types. By analysing these dominating emission bands, different values of intensities, I_{452} and I_{670} are calculated for each oil sample and the results are compared in Fig. 4. The smart app algorithm compares I_{452} and I_{670} to determine the oil types automatically and finally display results. The results are consistent with the spectra measured using the benchtop instruments in [19], [50], [51].

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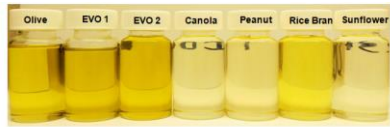
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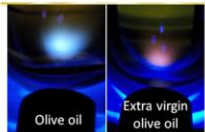
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(a) Under normal ambient light (identical vials)



(b) Under UV light

Fig. 2. Oil samples of different types. Appearance of different oil types in 21 mL clear glass vials of identical size at - (a) normal fluorescence lamp illumination (7 different brands), and (b) UV illumination (RO and EVO oils) from the fibre endoscope probe [2].

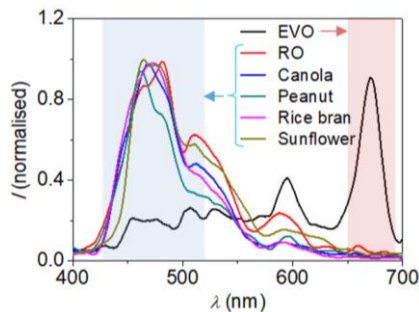


Fig. 3. Emission spectra of vegetable oils of different types measured on the mobile spectrofluorimeter [2].

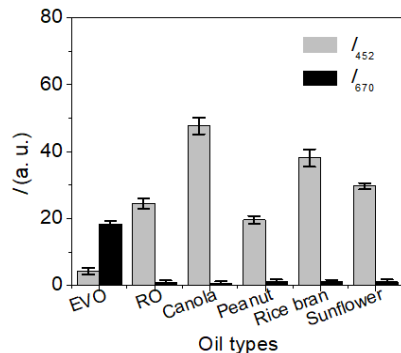


Fig. 4. Comparisons of the emission intensities measured at $\lambda \sim (452 \pm 40)$ nm and $\lambda \sim (670 \pm 20)$ nm bands.

C. The impact of storage

The unique characteristics of a particular oil type depends on a number of influences including olive type, cultivation process, olive growth, pressing method and storage conditions [20]. Among them, we have analysed the effects of storage condition using the mobile spectrofluorimeter. To do this, EVO and RO were stored for 30 days under a similar condition of normal supermarket storage; temperature: 22 °C, humidity: 50% and illumination: ~ 400 lux (typical fluorescent light illumination at height ~ 3 m). Spectra of fresh and stored oils are compared in Fig. 5(a) and 5(b). The changes of I_{452} and I_{670} are compared in Fig. 5(c). The storage condition makes a ~ 4.5-fold quenching of EVO fluorescence whereas the changes observed in RO is much lower and found within the experimental error limit. Although no noticeable variation is spotted on the visual appearance, the Chl-*a* emission in EVO spectrum disappears and a weak greenish-blue emission exists. By monitoring the intensity at $\lambda \sim 670$ nm, and further quantifying on the app, the user can realise the storing time and extent of degradation of the EVO oil. The degradation of olive oil during storage is primarily attributed to the oxidation by light and heat [48].

D. Photo-degradation

The exposure of light to EVO is primarily attributed as the main source of oxidation that makes the degradation oil quality [51]. Due to the presence of the Chl pigments in EVO, the photo-oxidation happens to it more likely than the RO oil. The Chl-*a* molecule in EVO alter their anti-oxidising property in the presence of light and enhances the formation of oxygen radicals. These radicals eventually accelerate oxidation of oil. Chl pigments in EVO are also likely to be deteriorated by demetalation – a light-induced process that produces colourless molecules in the oil. To avoid the photo-degradation that deteriorates the oil's quality, it is desirable to store and sell them in bottle or container that blocks the penetration of light. However, some of them can be seen in market to be sold in optically transparent bottles or containers. To analyse the effect container's transparency on overall photo-degradation, we measured the fluorescence intensity for oils storing in bottles of three different opacities (dark, semi-dark and clear) for the duration of 1 month. Although there is no visual distinction appeared between the samples, a significant change in overall emission particularly at the Chl band ($\lambda_{\text{peak}} \sim 670$ nm) is recorded in mobile fluorimeter measurements (Fig. 5(d)). The olive oil stored in a completely dark bottle gives strongest red emission, indicating the preservation of its anti-oxidant compounds. In contrast to this, oil stored in transparent bottle shows very weak emission of greenish-blue and the red emission diminished to nearly zero. This proves the direct relationships of photo-degradation of EVO oil on the optical transparency of containers.

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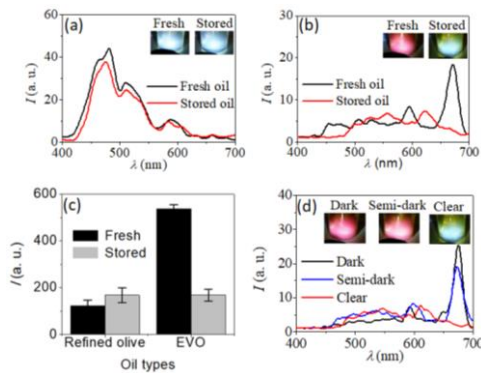


Fig. 5. Storage effect on emission spectra of olive oils measured using the mobile fluorimeter. (a) RO; and (b) EVO oils; and (c) a comparison of intensities measured under the $\lambda \sim 670$ nm band. (d) Emission spectra of EVO oils stored in bottles of three different opacities. Images in insets (a, b, and d) show oil samples under 370 nm excitation [2].

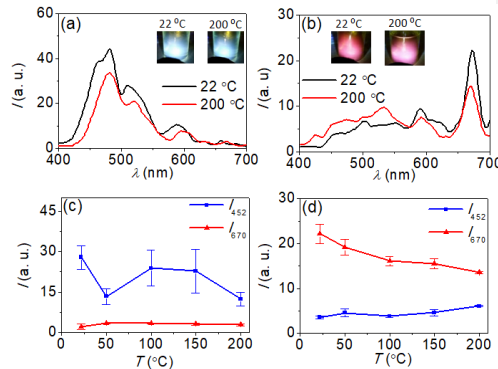


Fig. 6. Thermal effect on olive oils emission – (a) RO and (b) EVO oils measured using the mobile fluorimeter. Relative intensity changes at $\lambda \sim (452 \pm 40)$ nm and $\lambda \sim (670 \pm 20)$ nm bands with rising T in - (c) RO and (d) EVO oils [2].

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, a hand-held smartphone spectrometer with an optical fibre endoscope is demonstrated to be an effective means of differentiating and assessing the quality of EVO and RO oils. We have found an inherent fluorescent marker within EVOs to distinguish them from other vegetable oils. The strong fluorescence bands characteristic of oxidising components present within the more refined oils are observed compared to the EVO oils. Significant changes in oil quality under light and heat can be identified by measuring their fluorescence spectra. Rather than being fake products many EVOs are almost certainly degraded due to their sale within optically transparent bottles. Therefore, it is crucial during bottling, packaging, transportation and storage to limit the exposure of the EVO to light and changes in temperature to ensure that the initial high quality bottled oil reaches the consumer in these same conditions. These types of measurements are essential for rapid field diagnostics and regional mapping [34] during processing, storing and marketing, making interactive customer service and assurance one step closer to fruition.

This work has demonstrated the power of the smartphone spectrofluorimeter – a prominent example of the lab-in-a-phone technology – as a simple, relatively low-cost diagnostic tool at all stages of oil production, transport and retail. This data can be generated and captured live to market via on-line cloud services making it amenable for the international supply of goods directly from the farm to consumer without the need for costly and often prohibitively expensive middle parties.

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E. Thermal degradation

In addition to photo-degradation, heat exposure is also considered to be an important factor degrading olive oils and turning them rancid [48], [50]. This is mainly due to the decrease of hydroxytyrosol molecules with rising temperature. Regular use of degraded oils of any types (due to old storage or overheated) may adversely affect the human body. To study the thermal degradation, olive oil samples were heated for different temperatures between $T \sim 22$ and 200 °C and their emission spectra were measured using the smart mobile fluorimeter. The samples are allowed to cool down before each measurement and a dark room ensures no photo-degradation of samples.

Spectra of both EVO and RO oils heated at 22 °C (room temperature) and 200 °C are shown in Fig 6(a) and 6(b). Fluorescence intensities of RO and EVO at $\lambda \sim 452$ and 670 nm are plotted over the T range in Fig. 6(c) and 6(d) respectively. From the thermal analysis, the refined oil is found more stable than the extra virgin olive as expected. Within the experimental error range the results are consistent with those obtained from a benchtop fluorimeter [19]. The fluorescence emissions in EVO sample corresponding to oxidizing and anti-oxidising bands respectively decrease and increase at the rate of $(dI/dT)_{452} \sim 0.50$ and $(dI/dT)_{670} \sim 0.40$. The changes of emission can be ascribed due to the production of oxidation compounds [19].

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Sydney supported by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training. Z. Yu acknowledges a summer scholarship at the interdisciplinary Photonics Laboratories.

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