

## Diff Quik and Other Rapid Stains

Rapid stains are easy to use and as a result have found their way into many veterinary practices where they are applied for examination of blood smears and cytological samples.

### *How often do you change your stains?*

Each time a slide is dipped into the stain, dye particles are removed and over time the stain becomes diluted despite appearing to show no colour change with the naked eye. As such it becomes less effective in its ability to stain samples. It is often recommended that stain is changed weekly, however, this is expensive when only small numbers of smears are regularly processed. We have found that **about fifty slides can be stained before a noticeable deterioration in staining quality occurs**. It is still possible to continue using the stain, however, the smear must be dipped more often to obtain the same depth of colour.

### *Have you noticed that some smears are patchy in colour?*

A thin film of fixative or stain from the previous staining step remains on the surface of the smears. As stains and fixative (methanol) do not mix well, areas of the smear can remain unstained or poorly stained. This is more pronounced when stain is dropped onto the slide or when the slide is held stationary in the stain instead of being dipped.

