



PCR in Space

Apr 09, 2015

How do cosmic rays affect DNA? Does DNA behave differently in microgravity? Can PCR be used to find new life forms?

These are examples of questions that the [Genes in Space program](#) from Boeing, Amplyus' miniPCR, and MfA may be tackling. The organization is holding a contest for students and educators to submit their ideas for PCR-based experiments to be tested on the International Space Station.

Last year, Scott Copeland from Boeing, an early user of miniPCR, [told GenomeWeb](#) that there were no PCR capabilities on the ISS and samples had to be returned to the ground for analysis, but that the size and cost of miniPCR made it an attractive candidate for use in space. At that time, Amplyus estimated that the one-pound platform would cost \$399 and reagents and consumables about \$150.

Students and educators interested in submitting a project idea have until the end of the month to do so. Applications will be judged based on the creativity and interest of the proposed experiment as well as whether it needs the ISS environment to be performed. Finalists will be announced in the middle of May, and the winner in July.

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