CLAIMS

1. A holder for a capillary, comprising:

a housing having a passage to receive a capillary;

a clamping mechanism configurable between:

an engaged state in which the clamping mechanism is configured to retain a capillary receivable in the passage in use; and

a disengaged state in which the clamping mechanism is configured to allow insertion/removal of a capillary in the passage in use; and

a release mechanism comprising a carriage translatably received in the housing and operatively associated with the clamping mechanism and movable between a first position, in which the clamping mechanism is configured in said engaged state; and a second position, in which the clamping mechanism is configured in said disengaged state, wherein the release mechanism is configured to bias the clamping mechanism towards the engaged state, wherein the passage in the housing comprises an end stop provided by a surface of the carriage, configured to abut the end of a capillary inserted in the passage in use.

2. A holder according to claim 1, wherein the carriage comprises a substantially planar front surface which is substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the passage.

3. A holder according to any preceding claim, configured to eject a capillary retained in the passage as the release mechanism changes the clamping mechanism to said disengaged state.

4. A holder according to any preceding claim, wherein the release mechanism is biased towards the first position.

5. A holder according to any preceding claim, wherein the clamping mechanism comprises:

a clamping arm, pivotably mounted at a first end to the housing and pivotably mounted at a second end to the release mechanism; and

a clamping element mounted to the clamping arm between the first and second ends.

6. A holder according to claim 5, wherein the clamping element is pivotably mounted to the clamping arm.

7. A holder according to claim 5 or 6, wherein the clamping element comprises a capillary-engaging tooth at each of a first and second end of the clamping element.

8. A holder according to any of claims 5 to 7, wherein the clamping element comprises a leaf spring.

9. A holder according to any preceding claim, wherein the passage is at least partially defined by a bore of the housing.

10. A holder according to any preceding claim, further comprising a capillary, wherein the clamping mechanism is configured in said engaged state such that at least a portion of the capillary is substantially retained in the passage.

11. A method of disengaging a capillary from a holder, the holder comprising: a housing having a passage in which a capillary is received; a clamping mechanism configured in an engaged state so as to retain the capillary received in the passage; and a release mechanism comprising a carriage translatably received in the housing and operatively associated with

the clamping mechanism and configured to bias the clamping mechanism towards the engaged state, the method comprising:

applying a force to the release mechanism which is greater than the biasing force to change the clamping mechanism from said engaged state to a disengaged state to allow removal of the capillary from the passage.

12. A method according to claim 11, comprising ejecting the capillary from the passage.

13. A method of retaining a capillary in a holder, the holder comprising a housing having a passage, a clamping mechanism and a release mechanism comprising a carriage translatably received in the housing and operatively associated with the clamping mechanism and configured to bias the clamping mechanism towards an engaged state, the method comprising:

applying a force to the release mechanism which is greater than the biasing force, to move the clamping mechanism towards a disengaged state;

inserting a capillary into the passage;

removing the force, to retain the capillary in the passage.