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Developing a platform for Fresnel diffractive radiography with 1 μm spatial resolution at the National Ignition Facility

M. O. Schoelmerich, T. Döppner, C. H. Allen, L. Divol, M. Oliver, D. Haden, M. Biener, J. Crippen, J. Delora-Ellefson, B. Ferguson, D. O. Gericke, A. Goldman, A. Haid, C. Heinbockel, D. Kalantar, Z. Karmiöl, G. Kemp, J. Kroll, O. L. Landen, N. Masters, Y. Ping, C. Spindloe, W. Theobald, and T. G. White

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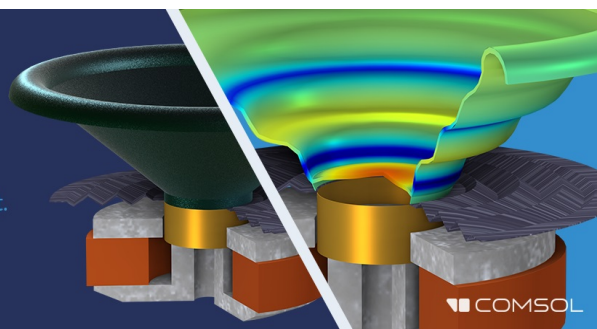
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M. O. Schoelmerich,^{1,a)} T. Döppner,¹ C. H. Allen,² L. Divol,¹ M. Oliver,³ D. Haden,² M. Biener,¹ J. Crippen,⁴ J. Delora-Ellefson,¹ B. Ferguson,¹ D. O. Gericke,⁵ A. Goldman,² A. Haid,⁴ C. Heinbockel,¹ D. Kalantar,¹ Z. Karmiol,² G. Kemp,¹ J. Kroll,¹ O. L. Landen,¹ N. Masters,¹ Y. Ping,¹ C. Spindloe,³ W. Theobald,⁶ and T. G. White²

AFFILIATIONS

¹Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, L-493, 7000 East Avenue, Livermore, California 94550, USA

²Department of Physics, University of Nevada, Reno, 1664 N Virginia St., Reno, Nevada 89557, USA

³Central Laser Facility, STFC Rutherford-Appleton Laboratory, Chilton OX11 0QX, United Kingdom

⁴General Atomics, P.O. Box 85608, San Diego, California 92186-5608, USA

⁵Centre for Fusion, Space and Astrophysics, Department of Physics, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL, United Kingdom

⁶Laboratory for Laser Energetics, 250 E River Rd., Rochester, New York 14623, USA

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^{a)}Author to whom correspondence should be addressed: schoelmerich1@llnl.gov

ABSTRACT

An x-ray Fresnel diffractive radiography platform was designed for use at the National Ignition Facility. It will enable measurements of micron-scale changes in the density gradients across an interface between isochorically heated warm dense matter materials, the evolution of which is driven primarily through thermal conductivity and mutual diffusion. We use 4.75 keV Ti K-shell x-ray emission to heat a 1000 μm diameter plastic cylinder, with a central 30 μm diameter channel filled with liquid D_2 , up to 8 eV. This leads to a cylindrical implosion of the liquid D_2 column, compressing it to $\sim 2.3 \text{ g/cm}^3$. After pressure equilibration, the location of the D_2 /plastic interface remains steady for several nanoseconds, which enables us to track density gradient changes across the material interface with high precision. For radiography, we use Cu He- α x rays at 8.3 keV. Using a slit aperture of only 1 μm width increases the spatial coherence of the source, giving rise to significant diffraction features in the radiography signal, in addition to the refraction enhancement, which further increases its sensitivity to density scale length changes at the D_2 /plastic interface.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The warm dense matter (WDM) state is found in several astrophysical environments, such as planetary interiors or white dwarfs,^{1,2} and holds relevance in understanding controlled inertial confinement fusion (ICF).³ The structure and dynamics of these systems crucially depend on transport properties, such as thermal conductivity, viscosity, and diffusion. For example, Rayleigh–Taylor growth rates are dampened by viscosity and

mutual diffusivity.^{4–6} In ICF, hydrodynamic instability growth leading to the mixing of ablator material into the fuel and hotspot is one of the leading degradation mechanisms of implosion performance.^{4,5}

Theoretical descriptions of plasma transport properties typically have their roots either in the plasma or the condensed matter limits; however, these usually break down in the WDM region. Modeling matter in this parameter regime is particularly challenging as one often encounters systems with strong ion–ion correlations

and electrons that exhibit distinct quantum behavior. To date, only a few experiments have attempted to measure transport properties in the WDM regime, with those that have concentrated on either thermal conductivity^{7,8} or viscosity.⁹ Recently, there have been promising results at the Linac Coherent Light Source (LCLS) in which inelastic x-ray scattering was used to measure the transport properties in WDM. Fitting the ion component of the experimental spectra using hydrodynamic modeling has allowed the properties of the bulk plasma to be extracted. Unfortunately, these measurements remain bandwidth limited.⁹⁻¹¹

We have developed a Fresnel diffractive radiography (FDR) platform for the National Ignition Facility (NIF)¹² designed to probe WDM with an unprecedented spatial and temporal resolution. Combining this radiography platform with a cylindrical implosion geometry, we can measure the equation-of-state of compressed matter and potentially determine transport properties, such as thermal conductivity and diffusion. Our platform leverages previous work developing 1D refractive enhanced imaging at the Omega, and NIF lasers,^{13,14} and adapts the Fresnel diffractive radiography concept recently demonstrated at the Omega Laser Facility.^{15,16} In contrast to previous work on NIF, we have reduced the width of the slit aperture, which defines the x-ray source size, from 5 to 1 μm to enhance the spatial coherence of the source and hence significantly increase diffraction features.

In the proposed experiments, we use Ti K-shell x-ray emission to isochorically heat a 1000 μm diameter plastic cylinder with a 30 μm diameter channel at its center filled with cryogenic (~ 21 K) liquid D_2 (Fig. 1). This sets up a temperature differential between the two materials, with the deuterium initially remaining cold. The resulting pressure difference across the interface triggers a cylindrical implosion, compressing the deuterium column by about 10 \times , where the final deuterium density is larger than the plastic density. The rapid motion of the interface leads to an outgoing

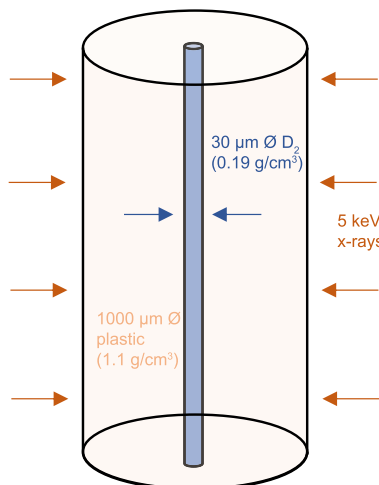


FIG. 1. Conceptual design of the physics package. A 30 μm diameter D_2 channel inside a 1000 μm diameter plastic cylinder is isochorically heated to warm dense matter conditions by ~ 5 keV x rays, triggering a cylindrical compression of the liquid D_2 column to $\sim 10\times$ its original density.

shock wave into the plastic and an incoming rarefaction wave, which can be used to determine the equation of state of these materials. Moreover, after an initial equilibration phase, the evolution across the interface is primarily driven by transport properties, such as thermal conductivity or diffusion. Our experimental platform leverages NIF's outstanding capabilities to produce a macroscopic warm dense matter sample that remains in a steady state for several nanoseconds, enabling the direct measurement of transport coefficients at the material interface.

II. EXPERIMENTAL PLATFORM AT THE NIF

A. Geometry of the experimental setup

A schematic of the proposed experimental setup at NIF is shown in Fig. 2. The target consists of a 10.8 mm tall, standard Al thermo-mechanical package (TMP) with an inner diameter of about 8 mm, as used in ICF implosions.^{12,17} However, instead of containing an Au hohlraum, the TMP holds two 100 μm thick polyimide containers on each side of the physics package at the center of the target, both encapsulating an annulus of TiO_2 foam ($\rho = 12 \text{ mg}/\text{cm}^3$). The polyimide containers have an opening (1.5 mm in diameter) along the vertical target axis since the target assembly requires a view along the vertical axis. 176 NIF drive beams (44 quads) pointed through the 4.88 mm laser entrance holes (LEH) of the TMP with a 1 mm diameter focal spot, and a 2 ns square pulse will be used to deliver a total energy of 600 kJ onto the TiO_2 foams, subsequently generating around 5 keV Ti K-shell x-ray emission. TiO_2 foams

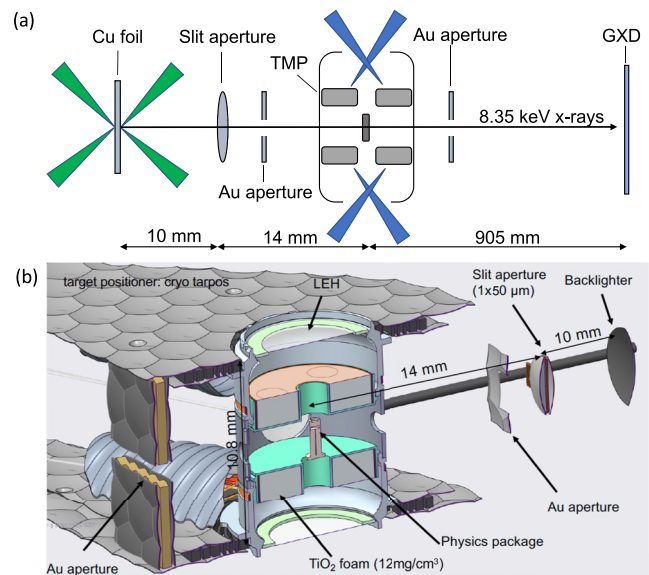


FIG. 2. (a) Schematic of the FDR imaging setup. Blue arrows represent drive beams, and green arrows represent backlighter beams. (b) Cut-away of the NIF target: A standard thermo-mechanical package (TMP) holds two TiO_2 foam disks on either side of the physics package at the center of the target. A Cu backlighter and a slit aperture are placed next to the TMP with additional Au apertures between the backlighter, target, and diagnostic, which shield against hard x rays from the hohlraum and help collimate the beamprobe x rays.

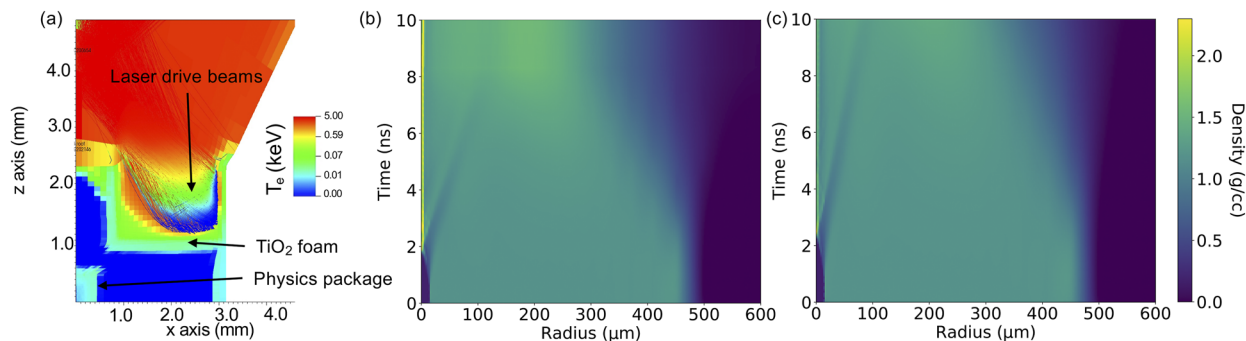


FIG. 3. Results of fully integrated hydrodynamic simulations using the Hydra code.¹⁹ (a) Simulation of one quadrant of the hohlraum near the end of the 2 ns-long drive. The laser energy is almost completely absorbed inside the TiO₂ foam, heating it to temperatures of up to 5 keV. In this simulation, the physics package at the center of the thermo-mechanical package reaches a temperature of 8 eV. (b) Density evolution of the channel and surrounding plastic as a function of time and radius calculated for 8 eV heating of the plastic coating and (c) 4 eV (half drive) heating of the plastic coating. The simulations depict a shock wave launched outward into the plastic and a rarefaction wave propagating into the cylinder.

were chosen for their demonstrated high laser to x-ray conversion efficiency, up to 5%.¹⁸ The absorption length of the x rays emitted from the foams is matched to the sample radius to ensure heating uniformity. The generated x rays will be absorbed by the physics package, heating it to ~ 8 eV [Fig. 3(a)].

B. Backlighter and slit aperture setup

Sixteen NIF beams will be pointed onto a 10 μm thick Cu foil, which serves as the backlighter for this experiment (Fig. 2). Irradiation of the Cu foil with the laser beams will generate Cu He- α x rays (8.35 keV) that will pass through a $1 \times 50 \mu\text{m}^2$ slit aperture placed 10 mm downstream toward the main target. The slit is milled into a 50 μm thick Ta plate that tapers on the side facing the target to $10 \times 50 \mu\text{m}^2$ (for a detailed description, see Ref. 15). The slit is fabricated by a focused ion beam (FIB) at the University of Nevada, Reno. The slit will be filled with CH to absorb the soft x-ray load at the wide end of the slit and hence delay slit closure. The spatial-coherence requirement for diffraction-based imaging constrains the slit size, which must be on the order of a few micrometers or less.²⁰ Because of this, the slit will also diffract the transmitted x rays. We calculated the diffraction parameter of the slit to be $\sqrt{10 \text{ mm} \times 1.485 \text{ \AA}} = 1.2 \mu\text{m}$. This is comparable to the slit width of 1 μm ; thus, we will be in the Fresnel regime with diffraction angles of the order of $1.48 \text{ \AA}/1 \mu\text{m} \approx 0.1 \text{ mrad}$. However, the slit (even accounting for its 50 μm thickness) will transmit a broad range (~ 0.2 rad) of photon angles from a typical 1.2 mm diameter backlighter source size, which will result in complete blurring of the slit diffraction pattern. Thus, the slit will produce a partially coherent point-like source with a source spread function of $\sim 1 \mu\text{m}$.

C. Diagnostics

A gated x-ray detector (GXD) with 240 ps integration time will record the radiography signal across four microchannel plate (MCP) strips that can be independently timed. The GXD is located 905 mm away from the target, yielding a large magnification of $M = (905 + 14 \text{ mm})/14 \text{ mm} = 65.6$ and ensuring that diffraction

features are visible given the $\sim 50 \mu\text{m}$ point spread function of the MCP. A 50 μm thick W wire will be placed at the exit window (225 μm offset from the direct line of sight). This wire will help to determine the effective source function and spatial scale of the recorded image. Furthermore, the DANTE diagnostics at NIF will record the temporal evolution of the Ti K-shell emission, thermal emission, and hard-ray emission from the target drive.

D. 2PP printed physics package

At the center of the TMP is the physics package, a 1000 μm diameter, 1.5 mm tall plastic cylinder with a 30 μm diameter channel running through the center [Fig. 4(a)]. Creating such a small feature is extremely challenging with conventional milling techniques; however, it can be accomplished with 2 Photon-Polymerization (2PP) techniques. The 2PP additive manufacturing process utilized a femtosecond laser and optical system to achieve ellipsoid-shaped polymerized voxels on a micrometer scale, which are overlapped along the length of the inner channel in 50 nm steps by translating the part with a precision direct drive linear motor stage.

As the goal of the experiment is to measure transport properties at the material interface between deuterium and plastic, it is vital that the interface is not rough to begin with. A surrogate sample to measure the roughness of the inner channel was fabricated by printing a semi-cylinder with the same printing parameters as the full cylinder. The semi-cylinder was imaged with scanning electron microscopy [Fig. 4(b)], and a surface roughness of sub 50 nm was measured in the exposed channel with a white light interferometer at multiple points [Fig. 4(c)]. The 2PP cylinder encapsulates a 30 μm diameter channel that is connected to a reservoir on top of the cylinder [Fig. 4(a)]. The reservoir is attached to a fill tube that is used to fill the channel with cryogenic cooled D₂ ($\rho = 0.19 \text{ g/cm}^3$). The plastic cylinder will be slowly cooled down, and the D₂ gas will condense within the channel and reservoir. The TMP itself will be low-level gas filled with He ($< 0.03 \text{ mg/cc}$) as a requirement for the temperature equilibration (the target is fielded at 21 K). The CH cylinder ($\rho = 1.15 \text{ g/cm}^3$) is made out of 60% bisphenol A ethoxylate diacrylate (C₂₀H₂₆O₆) and 40% dipenta erythritol penta-/hexa-acrylate (C₂₅H₃₂O₁₂).

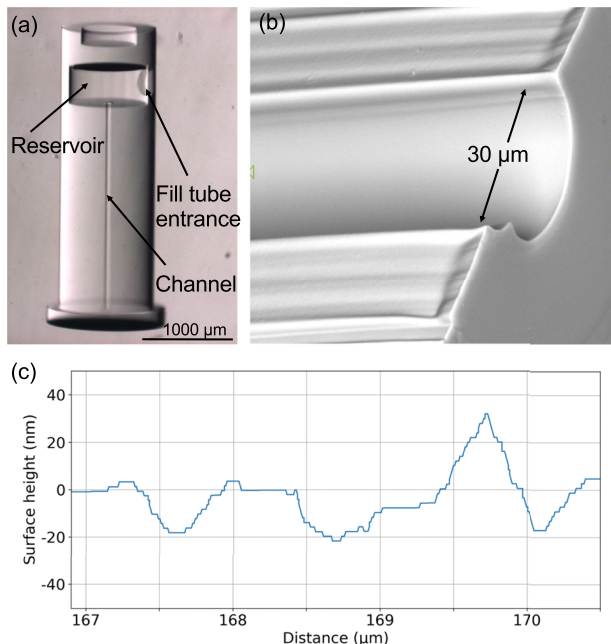


FIG. 4. (a) X-ray image of the 2PP printed cylinder along channel axis, including the 1.5 mm long and $30\ \mu\text{m}$ in diameter channel holding the liquid D_2 . The reservoir above the channel is $500\ \mu\text{m}$ in diameter, $170\ \mu\text{m}$ in height, and the fill tube entrance is $150\ \mu\text{m}$ in diameter. The total diameter of the cylinder is $1000\ \mu\text{m}$. (b) Scanning electron microscopy image of the channel that was printed only one-sided. (c) Lineout of the measured surface roughness of the channel.

III. SIMULATIONS

Radiation-hydrodynamic simulations showing the evolution of the target have been performed with Hydra.¹⁹ First, the 2PP printed cylinder will be heated by the Ti He K-shell x rays, which ultimately lead to propagating shocks and rarefaction waves in the plastic cylinder and D_2 channel (Fig. 3). After the first 2 ns, the temperature of the plastic will rise to approximately $\sim 8\ \text{eV}$, leading to the compression of the central channel and an increase of the D_2 density to $\sim 2.3\ \text{g/cm}^3$ [Fig. 3(b)]. At this point, the interface between D_2 and plastic will stagnate, after which the evolution of the density profile is driven by transport properties, namely thermal conduction and particle diffusion. As heat flows from the plastic into the D_2 , we observe an increase in the density of the plastic next to the interface and a corresponding decrease in the D_2 density.^{13,21} At the same time, particle diffusion acts to smooth out the density jump at the interface itself. Lineouts showing the evolution of the density profile across the channel are depicted in Fig. 5(a). The expected diffraction patterns are shown in Fig. 5(b), which combine the complex transmission function of the target with the optical transfer function for Fresnel diffraction. A sharp fringe contrast at the D_2 /plastic interface is expected, which will ultimately move to smaller radii at later probe times. At 4 ns, the conductivity-sensitive diffraction peaks are located at $\sim 3\ \mu\text{m}$ radius. Parameterization of the diffraction signal will be used to obtain information on the density profile and will help to determine the scale-length of thermal conduction in the D_2 and plastic. All calculations assumed

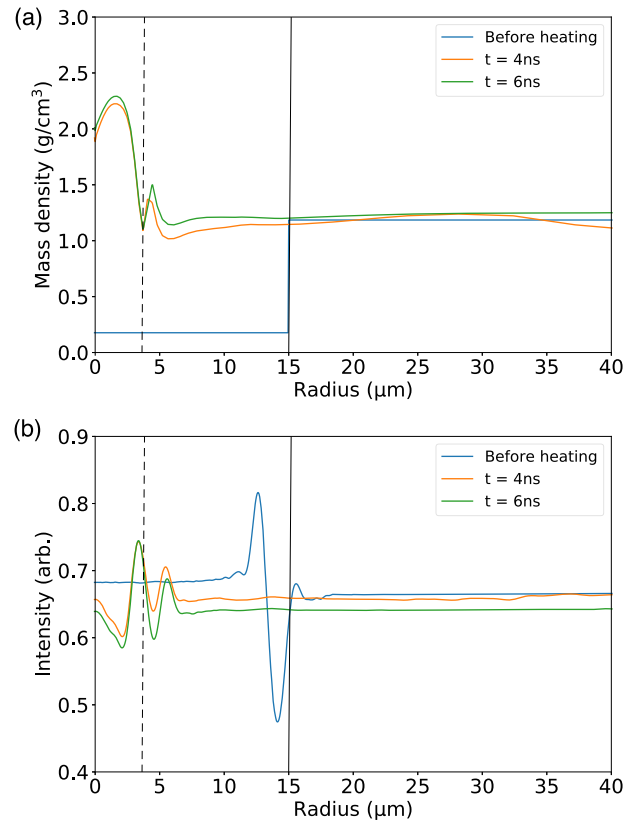


FIG. 5. (a) Density lineouts at three different probe times. The lineouts show the evolution of the density profile across the D_2 channel due to compression by the heated 2PP printed cylinder. The liquid D_2 column is compressed by $\sim 10\times$ to $\sim 2.3\ \text{g/cm}^3$. After a few reverberations, a quasi-steady state is reached at $\sim 4\ \text{ns}$ due to pressure equilibration between the D_2 and the surrounding plastic. (b) Simulated diffraction patterns derived from the predicted density lineouts. The solid black line represents the interface between D_2 and plastic at ambient state, the dashed line the interface at driven state.

a $1\ \mu\text{m}$ source size and were performed with the predicted density evolution shown in Fig. 5(a). Further details of the diffraction calculation can be found in Pogany *et al.*²²

In addition, we have simulated a low laser drive [Fig. 3(c)], which assumes that only half of the drive energy is delivered into the TiO_2 foams. In this case, the plastic is only heated to $\sim 4\ \text{eV}$, leading to a density increase of the D_2 to $\sim 1.7\ \text{g/cm}^3$. As the outgoing shock wave scales quite strongly with the drive (17.5 km/s for the high drive and 10.5 km/s for the low drive), we will be able to use this information to infer sample temperature. Furthermore, our simulations show that the target survives at least 10 ns in both laser drive cases before the incoming rarefaction wave reaches the D_2 channel.

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AUTHOR DECLARATIONS

Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflicts to disclose.

Author Contributions

M. O. Schoelmerich: Conceptualization (lead); Data curation (lead); Writing – original draft (lead); Writing – review & editing (lead). **T. Döppner:** Conceptualization (lead); Data curation (equal); Funding acquisition (lead); Investigation (equal); Methodology (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **C. H. Allen:** Investigation (lead); Methodology (equal); Visualization (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **L. Divol:** Data curation (equal); Formal analysis (equal); Investigation (equal); Software (equal); Visualization (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **M. Oliver:** Conceptualization (equal); Formal analysis (equal); Investigation (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **D. Haden:** Conceptualization (equal); Data curation (equal); Investigation (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **M. Biener:** Conceptualization (equal); Investigation (equal); Methodology (equal). **J. Crippen:** Methodology (equal). **J. Delora-Ellefson:** Methodology (equal). **B. Ferguson:** Methodology (equal). **D. Gericke:** Conceptualization (equal); Investigation (equal); Methodology (equal). **A. Goldman:** Methodology (equal). **A. Haid:** Methodology (equal). **C. Heinbockel:** Methodology (equal). **D. Kalantar:** Conceptualization (equal); Methodology (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Z. Karmioli:** Methodology (equal). **G. Kemp:** Methodology (equal). **J. Kroll:** Methodology (equal). **O. L. Landen:** Methodology (equal). **N. Masters:** Methodology (equal). **Y. Ping:** Conceptualization (equal); Investigation (equal); Methodology (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **C. Spindloe:** Methodology (equal). **W. Theobald:** Conceptualization (equal); Investigation (equal); Methodology (equal). **T. G. White:** Conceptualization (lead); Data

curation (equal); Formal analysis (equal); Funding acquisition (lead); Investigation (equal); Methodology (equal); Project administration (equal); Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal).

DATA AVAILABILITY

The data that support the findings of this study are available within the article.

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