Assessing the Occurrence and Magnitude of Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CECs) in 50 Largest Wastewater Treatment Plants in the U.S.A.

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National Municipal Effluent CEC Study Plant Selection Process

Large municipal plants

identified from Clean Watershed Needs Survey >75% municipal flow surface water (SW) discharge 50-1000 liters per person per day

In the US: 16,500 WWTPs -> 34 BGD

21 BGD = SW dischargers

16 BGD = SW disch, >75% municipal, 50-1000 LPD

Split this 16 BGD into thirds, based on plant flow:

Top third: 51 plants, 17% of US wastewater, 17% of population



National Municipal Effluent CEC Study Sampling 12/2010 – 3/2011

50 WWTPs (13 Repeated) serve 46M people, EPA Regions 2-9 – # States 20



24-hour composite samples - from 50 very large WWTPs (15 to >500 MGD) – Collected by Plants except for Plants in Regions 2 & 7

119 Analytes Measured

56 active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) + 7 metabolites *Kostich, Batt, and Lazorchak, 2014. Env Pol, 184:354.*

- 8 Hormones (4 estrogens, 3 androgens, and 1 progestin)
- **32-** Alkylphenols (APs, NP, Ops, APEOs, NPEOs & OPEOs))

Bisphenol A

15 - Perfluorinated Chemicals (PFCs)

Perfluoralkyl Acids (PFAAs)





Geographical Distribution



50 Largest Plants (20% pop, 17% discharge)



Detects out of 63 Pharmaceuticals



• 9 Pharmaceuticals (14 %) Detected at or above 1 ug/L •42 (84%) Effluents with 1-8 Pharms ≥ 0.7 ug/L or higher



Pharmaceuticals By Analyte

Weighted by Detects

Weighted by Total Mass





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Summary of 8 Hormones Across all 50 Effluents



- EE2 found in 49 (98%) Effluent 44 (88%) > PNEC of 0.35 ng/L
- Estradiol found in 30 (60%) Effluents
- •29 effluents have both EE2 and E2



Hormones By Analyte

Weighted by Detects

Weighted by Total Mass





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NonylPhenols By Analyte

Weighted by Detects

Weighted by Total Mass





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Summary of 15 PFAA (PFCs) Across all 50 Effluents





Perfluoroalkyl Acids PFAA (PFCs)

Perfluourinated Compounds By Analyte

C3A = PFPAC4A = PFBAC5A = PFPeAC6A = PFHxAC7A = PFHpAC8A = PFOAC9A = PFNAC10A = PFDAC11A = PFUdAC12A = PFDoAC13A = PFTrDAC4S = PFBSC6S = PFHxSC8S = PFOS

Weighted by Detects

Weighted by Total Mass





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Summary of Detects and Total Mass of all COCs

& by Mode of Action (MOA)

Environmental Protection Agency	Mean	Max	Min
116 total detected analytes	40 (34%)	67 (58%)	22 (19%)
Total Mass ng/L	25,849	294,367	1,233
MOA	Mean	Max	Min
EDCs (Hormones, NPs, PFAAs)	16,699	278,854	2.9
Anti Hypertensives 12	4,787	15,658	378
Neuro Trans Mod 19	1,559	4,716	182
Anti Inf (10)	1,039	8,097	0
Anti Bacterial 8	1,116	3,295	2.6
Gastric Anti acid (2)	234	1,352	13
Bronchodilator (1)		121	121
Anti Coagulant (1)		3,193	3,193

United States



Mode Of Action

Weighted by Detects

Weighted by Mean





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Take Home Message

• Need to be looking at the mixture not just the individual compounds

•Should look at groups of compounds within a similar MOA

- •Total Mass is just to illustrate the magnitude of individual contaminates and MOAs.
- •Using some activity or equivalency approach would be better for risk assessments
- •There are quite a few Pharmaceuticals exceeding 1 ug/L within the same effluent
- •EDCs Blood Pressure Meds Antidepressants Anti-inflammatories Antibacterials in that order are the dominate MOAs.



