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**Chronic dietary exposure of zebrafish to PAH mixtures results in carcinogenic but not genotoxic effects**

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**Abstract :**

Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) are ubiquitous contaminants that can be present at high levels as mixtures in polluted aquatic environments. Many PAHs are potent mutagens and several are well-known carcinogens. Despite numerous studies on individual compounds, little is known about the toxicity of PAHs mixtures that are encountered in environmental situations. In the present work, zebrafish were continuously fed from 5 days post-fertilisation to 14 months post-fertilisation (mpf) with a diet spiked with fractions of either pyrolytic (PY), petrogenic light oil (LO), or petrogenic heavy oil (HO) origin at three concentrations. A decrease in survival was identified after 3 mpf in fish fed with the highest concentration of HO or LO, but not for PY. All PAH fractions caused preneoplastic and neoplastic disorders in long-term-exposed animals. Target tissues were almost exclusively of epithelial origin, with the bile duct epithelium being the most susceptible to chronic exposure to all PAH fractions, and with germ cells being the second most responsive cells. Significantly higher incidences of neoplasms were observed with increasing PAH concentration and exposure duration. The most severe carcinogenic effects were induced by dietary exposure to HO compared to exposure to LO or PY (45, 30 and 7 %, respectively, after 9 to 10 months of exposure to an intermediate concentration of PAHs). In contrast, earliest carcinogenic effects were detected as soon as 3 mpf after exposure to LO, including the lowest concentration, or to PY. PAH bioactivation and genotoxicity in blood was assessed by ethoxyresorufin-O-deethylase activity quantification and comet and micronuclei assays, respectively, but none of these were positive. Chronic dietary exposure of zebrafish to PAH mixtures results in carcinogenotoxic events that impair survival and physiology of exposed fish.

**Keywords :** Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon, Zebrafish, Carcinogenesis, Genotoxicity, Neoplasia, Carcinoma, Toxicological pathology

## Introduction

1  
2 Persistent organic pollutants (POP) are contaminants of natural or anthropic origin including  
3 several chemical families such as dioxins, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), polybrominated  
4 diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) and polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). The diverse PAHs are  
5 commonly classified into low molecular weight (LMW) or high molecular weight (HMW)  
6 PAHs, based on their molecular structure and their number of rings. Differences in the  
7 structure and size of individual PAHs result in substantial variability in their physical,  
8 chemical and toxicological properties.  
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11 Because of increasing human activity, PAHs are emitted at an ever-growing level and their  
12 concentration in the environment has considerably increased over recent decades (Shen et al.  
13 2013). They are **widespread** contaminants present in the environment as complex fractions of  
14 dozens of individual PAHs. They may be generated mainly by three processes: combustion of  
15 organic matter (pyrolytic origin), release of petroleum (petrogenic origin), or to a lesser extent  
16 diagenesis (degradation of the organic matter) (Neff 1979). Once formed, PAHs may enter  
17 aquatic environment through the spillage of petroleum, industrial discharges, atmospheric  
18 fallout, and urban runoff (Neff 1979). Pyrolytic PAHs mainly enter in the aquatic  
19 environment via the atmosphere, associated with particles that reduce their bioavailability. In  
20 contrast, petrogenic PAHs can be directly discharged in the aquatic environment. In polluted  
21 environments, bivalves accumulate high levels of PAHs via their filtering activity (Hylland  
22 2006; Rocher et al. 2006). Fish are exposed through water, through contact with contaminated  
23 sediments and by feeding. In molluscs and fish, some HMW PAHs can be metabolized into  
24 reactive compounds with DNA-binding activity (Le Goff et al. 2006; Fernandez-Tajes et al.  
25 2011). These metabolism processes involve activation of AhR pathway, in particular the  
26 cytochrome P450 1A (cyp1a)(Billiard et al. 2002; Otte et al. 2010).  
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29 Long-term exposures to sublethal concentrations of PAHs have been shown to dramatically  
30 impair survival and physiology of exposed fish and their progeny (White et al. 1999). Some  
31 PAHs are potent mutagens (Mersch-Sundermann et al. 1992), and many are well-known  
32 carcinogens both in laboratory and environmental conditions (Hawkins et al. 1990; Myers et  
33 al. 1991). Elevated prevalence of hepatic neoplasms has therefore frequently been reported in  
34 fishes from heavily PAH-contaminated environments (Baumann 1989). Additionally, their  
35 major role is suspected in the aetiology of human cancer following exposure to cigarette  
36 smoke, urban air pollution, coal combustion, and certain occupational situations (Mastrangelo  
37 et al. 1996; Warshawsky 1999).  
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Various small aquarium fish, like zebrafish, have been utilized as carcinogenesis models (Stanton 1965). In comparison to many rodent species (Ward 1981), advantages of zebrafish include heightened sensitivity to carcinogens with a very low background tumor rate (Reddy et al. 1999a). Due to their short generation time, studies can be conducted near the life span of the individuals in about 12 months (Hawkins et al. 2003), an invaluable advantage in long-term studies that involve environmentally realistic exposures. The potential of zebrafish as a model for cancer research has been emphasized by the demonstrated similarities of transcriptome profiles between zebrafish carcinogen-induced tumor and human cancer (Lam et al. 2006). Other advantages include small size of adults that is compatible with a complete histological examination of all organs and tissues in a few sections without bias of a selective tissue sampling.

Following the intensive analyses already made on individual prototypical compounds like dimethyl-benz[a]anthracene (DMBA) and benzo[a]pyrene (BaP), there is a need to study PAHs as fractions currently encountered in environmental situations and to minimize potentially confounding factors. Moreover, most previous laboratory studies in fish were conducted with dissolved PAHs (Jonsson et al. 2004) or PAH in sediments (Cachot et al. 2007). **Dietary exposure** has been more rarely explored to date (Rice et al. 2000; Wessel et al. 2010), especially if considering carcinogenic effects. In this context, Spitsbergen *et al.* (Spitsbergen et al. 2000a) chose to explore the long-term carcinogenic effects of high concentrations of one model PAH, DMBA, **regarded as one of the most potent known PAH with dibenzo[def,p]chrysene**.

The aim of this study is to document carcinogenetic and genotoxic effects induced by environmentally relevant conditions of PAH exposure, using realistic fractions in both qualitative and quantitative points of view, and a long-term dietary exposure started at the first meal of the fish and maintained afterwards.

## **Materials and methods**

### *PAH-contaminated diet preparation*

Three aromatic fractions were used for exposures: i) a pyrolytic fraction (PY) extracted from sediments collected in the polluted site of Seine Estuary (Oissel, France) and ii) two petrogenic fractions obtained from Erika fuel (heavy oil; HO) and Arabian light crude oil (LO). PAH extractions were performed as previously described (Letellier et al. 1997; Cachot et al. 2007). **Briefly contaminants were extracted from the sampled sediment with Accelerated Solvent Extraction (ASE300, Dionex). The two oils were dissolved in pentane to induce**

1 asphaltene precipitation (Mazeas & Budzinski 2001, Mazeas & Budzinski 2002). The  
2 sediment extract and the two pentane extracts were then reconcentrated using a vacuum  
3 evaporation system (Rapidvap, Labconco, Kansas city, USA). All three extracts were then  
4 purified using alumina columns (preparative liquid chromatography) and eluted with  
5 dichloromethane (Acros Organics, Thermo Fisher Scientific, Geel, Belgium). After another  
6 re-concentration step, aliphatic fractions obtained after elution on silica columns with pentane  
7 were discarded and aromatic fractions were obtained using pentane/dichloromethane (65/35,  
8 v/v) as solvents (Mazeas & Budzinski 2001, Mazeas & Budzinski 2002). Finally, samples  
9 were re-concentrated and the final fractions kept in dichloromethane (stored at -20 °C) for  
10 spiking experiments. PAHs concentrations of the three fractions were reported by Vignet et al.  
11 (Vignet et al. In press) and are presented in supplementary table 1.  
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20 Diets were prepared using the commercial diet INICIO Plus 0.5 (Biomar, France). INICIO  
21 Plus 0.5 is made of fish oil and flour and some plants extracts. According to producer its  
22 composition is as follows: raw proteins 58 %, raw lipids 15 %, non-nitrogenous extract  
23 10.6 %, raw cellulose 0.4 %, ashes 11 % and total phosphorous 1.6 %. Vitamin A (9000  
24 U.I/kg), vitamin E (350 mg/kg) and vitamin C (1000 mg/kg) were added. Food pellets were  
25 ground to obtain age-adapted pellets and spiked with PAH fractions. Three concentrations,  
26 0.3X, 1X and 3X, were used with the 1X concentration corresponding to 5 µg.g<sup>-1</sup> for the sum  
27 of concentration of 16 indicator PAHs selected by the US Environmental Protection Agency  
28 (US-EPA). This 1X concentration is representative of that found in molluscs in the Seine  
29 Estuary (Rocher et al. 2006). Diets are named after the origin of the fraction and its  
30 concentration: 1X pyrolytic fraction diet will be named: PY-1X.  
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#### 42 *Fish exposure and sampling*

43 This study was conducted with the approval of the Animal Care Committee of France under  
44 the official licence of M.-L. Bégout (17-010). We used zebrafish wild type TU strain (ZFIN  
45 ID: 76 ZDB-GENO-990623-3), which was established in our platform (PEP –  
46 <http://wwz.ifremer.fr/pep>) 6 years ago as large batches of individuals originating from the  
47 Amagen platform (Gif-sur-Yvette, France) and the Pasteur Institute fish facility (Paris,  
48 France).  
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54 Detailed exposure procedures are described by Vignet et al. (Vignet et al. In press). Briefly,  
55 eggs were obtained by random pairwise mating of zebrafish placed together in spawning  
56 boxes the evening before collection (AquaSchwarz, Germany). Eggs were collected the next  
57 morning and the fertilisation rate assessed within two hours of collection: only spawns with  
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1 rate above 80 % were kept. To provide as homogeneous and similar incubation conditions as  
2 possible, a minimum of five spawns were mixed and 50 embryos randomly sampled and  
3 transferred to as many Petri dishes as required for all conditions. Exposures to PY, HO and  
4 LO fraction spiked-diet were performed independently and successively in triplicates. For  
5 each exposure, a fourth control condition was included corresponding to the plain food treated  
6 as spiked-food with dichloromethane, used as carrier solvent for PAHs spiking. Embryos and  
7 larvae were maintained at 28 °C in Petri dishes in clean medium in an incubator with the same  
8 photoperiod as for adults. From 5 days post-fertilisation (dpf), larvae from each replicate were  
9 **reared** in separated 1 L-tanks and transferred after 12 days in 10 L-tanks in a flow-through  
10 system with a water renewal increasing with age and reaching a daily rate of 40 % after 1  
11 month. Starting at 5 dpf, fish were fed twice a day with size-adapted food and once a day with  
12 uncontaminated *Artemia nauplii*. The size of the food pellets provided was increased as the  
13 fish aged. The ration was *ad libitum* from 5 dpf until the first biometric measures (2 or 3  
14 months post-fertilisation (mpf)); thereafter, the quantity of food provided was 2 % of the  
15 biomass in each tank, with the exception of the PY-spiked food, for which the ration was 5 %  
16 at 2 mpf and then reduced to 2 % at 3 mpf. Rations were then adapted after each biometry on  
17 a monthly basis.

18 In the case of samplings dedicated to comet, EROD and micronuclei assays, fish were starved  
19 overnight and day of sampling.

### 20 *Survival monitoring*

21 Survival was monitored daily from 5 to 30 dpf and then on a monthly basis as described by  
22 Vignet et al. (Vignet et al. **In press**). The present study focused on latter stages and survival  
23 was calculated as a percentage of the starting number of fish for each exposure.

### 24 *Histopathological evaluation*

25 Fish were sampled at 3 mpf and 9-10 mpf for all diets except for HO-3X for which the last  
26 sampling was 7 mpf. Additional samplings were performed at 7 mpf for HO-0.3X and HO-1X  
27 and at 14 mpf for PY diets. Control fish were systematically sampled in parallel. Fish were  
28 euthanized with a lethal dose of benzocaine (250 µg.L<sup>-1</sup>; Sigma-Aldrich, Saint-Quentin  
29 Fallavier, France) and fixed in 4 % formalin after ventral incision of the abdomen for larger  
30 individuals (Daouk et al. 2011). A histopathological evaluation was performed on a total of  
31 760 fish from 3 mpf to 14 mpf (mean sex ratio of 0.52) (Table 1). The principles of step  
32 sectioning adult zebrafish have already been published (Spitsbergen et al. 2000a). After 24 h  
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1 of fixation, fins, most scales and the caudal peduncle were carefully removed and samples  
2 were dehydrated in graded ethanol solutions and embedded in paraffin. Serial sagittal step  
3 sections were cut from the left side of the fish. Four step sections from each adult fish were  
4 mounted on glass slides, 1 from eye anterior chamber level, 1 from eye posterior chamber  
5 level, 1 just medial to the eye, and 1 at the midline. Sections were routinely stained with  
6 haematoxylin-eosin-saffron (HES). Additional sections were stained with Ziehl-Neelsen acid-  
7 fast stain for mycobacteriosis, Hall's bilirubin stain and Picrosirius red stain for collagen.

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Immunochemistry assays were performed using i) a mouse anti-cytokeratin (CK) antibody (Dako, Glostrup, Denmark; 1:500) for cells of epithelial origin or ii) a mouse Proliferating Cell Nuclear Antigen (PCNA) antibody (clone PC10, Abcam Inc., Cambridge, MA, USA; 1:3000) as a proliferation marker. Briefly, paraffin-embedded sections were deparaffinised and subjected to antigen retrieval respectively in Tris-EDTA pH 9.0 buffer (Zytomed Systems GmbH, Berlin, Germany) (98 °C, 40 min) and in boiling 10 mM citrate buffer (pH=6.0) for 20 min. Endogenous peroxidase activity was inhibited by incubating the samples in 3 % H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> in water for 10 min. The sections were then incubated for 30 min with 10 % normal goat serum (Dako). Primary antibody was incubated in 2 % BSA (Sigma, St. Louis, USA) for 1 hour at 37 °C and revealed using successively biotinylated secondary antibody (Dako, 1:300), streptavidin-peroxidase complex (Dako, 1:300) and 3,3'-diaminobenzidine tetrahydrochloride (DAB, Dako).

All lesions were reported by a skilled pathologist certified by the European College of Veterinary Pathology. A minimum of 4 tissue sections per fish was observed to ensure the observation of all tissues and organs. Due to the high occurrence of bile duct abnormalities, a semi-quantitative scoring was performed for all fish except those for which none bile ducts were visible on the all-4 sections. A score reflecting biliary pericanalar fibrosis (0, no lesion; 1, some collagen deposit of less than 5 µm thick; 2, collagen deposit of less than 10 µm thick; 3, severe continuous collagen deposit; 4, fibrodysplasia) and a score reflecting severity of the bile duct epithelium lesions (0, no lesion; 1, hyperplasia; 2, dysplasia; 3, epithelio-mesenchymal transition; 4, carcinoma) were attributed.

### *Comet assay*

For measurement of DNA strand breaks by the alkaline comet assay, 2 mpf-fish were sampled in each control and assay tank (3 fish per tank) to assess the level of DNA damage in the erythrocytes. Due to the small size of the fish, whole fish head was sampled and placed directly into 500 µL of a freezing medium. The freezing medium made of RPMI 1640

1 supplemented with DMSO 20 % and SVF 25 % was then withdrawn in a 1 mL cryotube and  
2 stored in liquid nitrogen prior to analysis.

3 According to a previously described protocol (Akcha et al. 2003), two slides per fish were  
4 prepared with 10  $\mu$ L of sample mixed with 75  $\mu$ L of low melting point agarose (LMP). Once  
5 the last LMP agarose layer was deposited and polymerised, the slides were immersed in an  
6 ice-cold lysis buffer (2.5 M NaCl, 0.1 M EDTANa<sub>2</sub>, 0.01 M Tris base, 1 % N-sarcosinate,  
7 10 % DMSO, 1 % Triton X-100, pH=10) for 1 h at room temperature in the dark. DNA  
8 unwinding was then performed by pre-incubating the slides in electrophoresis buffer (0.3 M  
9 NaOH, 0.001 M EDTA, pH=13) for 20 min at room temperature in the dark. DNA migration  
10 was performed in the same buffer for 12 min at 23 V (390 mA, E=0.66 V.cm<sup>-1</sup>). Slides were  
11 then washed, dehydrated and dried. Just before analysis, 75  $\mu$ L of Gel Red (1:10,000) were  
12 spread on the slide for at least 1 h at 4 °C for coloration. Slides were then analysed using an  
13 optical fluorescence microscope (Olympus BX60, x40) fitted to a CDD camera (Luca-S,  
14 Andor Technology) and an image analysis system (Komet 6, Kinetic Imaging Ltd.). The  
15 percentage of DNA present in the comet tail was calculated for each observed nucleus (50  
16 nuclei per slide).  
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### 30 *Micronuclei assay*

31 Micronuclei (MN) assay was performed on haemocytes from 8 to 9 month-old zebrafish.  
32 Twelve to fifteen fish (4 to 5 per replicate) from each control and assay tank were individually  
33 analysed. For HO, because of the high fish mortality observed with the highest concentration,  
34 only control, 0.3X, and 1X concentrations were examined.  
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40 Fish were anaesthetised by immersion for 10 min in benzocaine solution (50 mg.L<sup>-1</sup>). Caudal  
41 peduncle was cut using a clean razor blade and from 1 to 5  $\mu$ l of blood was collected from the  
42 caudal vein with a clean and heparinised 10  $\mu$ l-micropipette tip. Blood (1  $\mu$ l) was then  
43 smeared on a clean slide, air dried and then fixed in absolute ethanol for 15 min. Just before  
44 reading, slides were stained with 40  $\mu$ L acridine orange solution (0.003 % in PBS) and  
45 covered with a glass slip. Reading was processed using an epifluorescent microscope at x400  
46 magnification (Olympus, Rungis, France). Micronucleated cells frequency was manually  
47 recorded from 1,000 cells per slide using blind review by a single observer. A cell was  
48 considered micronucleated if MN was round shaped, distinct from main nucleus, size inferior  
49 to a third of the main nucleus, and with a similar green staining to the main nucleus (Hayashi  
50 et al. 1998). Non-isolated, stacked, more than bi-nucleated or orange-red stained cells were  
51 not taken into account.  
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2 *EROD activity*

3 EROD activity was measured for 3 to 4 individual 2 mpf-fish per tank, according to a  
4 previously published protocol (Burgeot and Menard 2004). Briefly, whole fish were crushed  
5 in a Potter cylinder with 5 volumes of phosphate buffer. After centrifugation for 20 min at  
6 9000 G, the kinetic of resorufin formation was measured on the supernatant fraction after  
7 addition of 7-ethoxyresorufin (2  $\mu$ M) and NADPH (0.25 mM) in a 96-well micro-plate with a  
8 spectrofluorimeter (TECAN Safire). Proteins were measured by the Bradford method and  
9 results were expressed as fmol/min/mg protein.  
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18 *Kinetics of cyp1a and ahr2 genes expression*

19 In order to decipher the kinetics of *ahr2* and *cyp1a* expression in relation with feeding, a  
20 specific starvation/feeding assay was performed with PY-3X diet. Exposures were performed  
21 as previously described with the following modifications. At 13 dpf, larvae were transferred  
22 in clean water (without food) and a 24 h starvation period was carried out. At 15 dpf (30 min  
23 after the onset of light), one part of larvae was fed again and pools of 20 larvae were sampled  
24 after 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 24 hours post-refeeding (hprf). Before this diet, 20 larvae were  
25 sampled to establish the basal level of *cyp1a* and *ahr2* at 0 hprf. The remaining part of larvae  
26 was kept starved and sampled after 10 and 24 h. As a control, an assay with the control diet  
27 was performed in parallel. Finally, larvae were euthanized, pooled, transferred in liquid  
28 nitrogen and stored at -80 °C until analysis.  
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38 Total RNA were extracted from larvae samples using Trizol® Reagent (Invitrogen, Carlsbad,  
39 CA, USA) with successive chloroform/ethanol purifications following manufacturer's  
40 instructions. Then, first-strand cDNA was synthesized with a standard reverse transcription  
41 procedure from total 1  $\mu$ g of RNA using M-MLV Reverse Transcriptase (Promega, Madison,  
42 USA) according to manufacturer's instructions. Finally, real-time PCR reactions were  
43 performed in sterile 96-wells PCR plates with StepOnePlus™ instrument (Applied  
44 Biosystems®, Life Technologies, USA) using reaction fraction based on the Fast SYBR®  
45 Green Master Mix 5X (Applied Biosystems®), and primers at 600 nM. The thermal cycling  
46 conditions were following: 10 min at 95 °C (activation), 15 s at 95 °C (denaturation), 40 s at  
47 60 °C (hybridization) and 30 s at 72 °C (annealing) for 40 cycles. Gene's expression levels of  
48 *cyp1a* and *ahr2* were quantified by a comparative method from threshold cycle ( $C_T$ ) number  
49 and normalized from three housekeeping genes (*eef1*, *g6pd* and  $\beta$ -*actin*). Primer sequences of  
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1 target genes were designed with Primer3 software (<http://bioinfo.ut.ee/primer3-0.4.0/>) and  
2 reported in Table 2.  
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### 5 *Statistical analysis*

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7 Unless otherwise mentioned, reported results are means  $\pm$  SEM. All statistical analyses were  
8 carried out at a 95% level of significance. Differences in survival were assessed within each  
9 diet using Log-rank (Mantel-Cox) test using Prism (Graphpad) software. Statistical analyses  
10 of histopathological results were performed with Statistica 9.0 software (Statsoft, Tulsa, OK,  
11 USA).  
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16 A GLM model was applied with age or PAH fraction tested as fixed factors, replicate, tank  
17 and gender as random ones. Only results for fixed factors and for the interaction between  
18 them are presented in the text. Post-hoc tests were performed using Newman-Keuls in each  
19 case. No tank effect was detected and an individual effect was only detected on tumor  
20 incidence at 3 mpf and on presence of epithelium dysplasia in LO-exposed fish. Global  
21 incidences, i.e. proportion of fish presenting duct epithelium dysplasia, pericanalar fibrosis or  
22 duct carcinomas, were analysed using chi-square test.  
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29 Raw comet data were Ln transformed to reach normality and then analysed by a one way-  
30 ANOVA with Statistica Software. For micronuclei assay, comparisons of mean frequency  
31 were performed using one-way ANOVA after checking for normal distribution of data  
32 (Shapiro-Wilk's test on 1 % residues) and variance homogeneity (Levene's test).  
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36 Gene expression data were analysed with a Relative Expression Software Tool REST-2009<sup>©</sup>  
37 (Qiagen, <http://www.REST.de.com>). At 0 hprf, PY-3X data was given in relative expression  
38 ratio compared to the control condition. For other analysed times, relative expression of the  
39 fed larvae was compared to that of the starved ones.  
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### 45 **Results**

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47 This work is part of a larger program that included analysis of other effects following  
48 exposure to the same diets. Chemical analysis of fractions, diets and metabolites are presented  
49 elsewhere (Vignet et al. **In press**). Briefly, PY fraction was characterized by a high proportion  
50 of heavy PAHs and almost no substituted derivatives. HO fraction contained moderate levels  
51 of heavy PAHs and alkylated derivatives. LO fraction contained low level of heavy PAHs and  
52 a high level of alkylated ones. Diets composition reflected the one of fractions (**Supplemental**  
53 **table 2**). The concentration for the 16 US-EPA PAHs in 1X diets were PY-1X:  $4505 \pm 1527$ ,  
54 LO-1X:  $2739 \pm 231$  and HO-1X:  $1887 \pm 130$  ng.g<sup>-1</sup>dry weight and the total concentration of  
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1 PAHs (included alkylated ones) was similar in the three 1X diets:  $5816 \pm 1433$ ,  $4663 \pm 360$   
2 and  $6726 \pm 278$  ng.g<sup>-1</sup> for PY, HO and LO respectively. Quantification of hydroxylated  
3 metabolites in 15 dpf-larvae confirmed fish contamination and results were consistent with  
4 diet composition.  
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### 7 8 9 *Mortality*

10 Survival was assessed separately for each PAH fraction using Log-rank (Mantel-Cox) test  
11 (Fig. 1). No difference was observed between concentrations for PY fraction (Chi-square  
12 value=0.80; p=0.849). For HO and LO diets, survival curves were different between  
13 concentrations (respectively Chi-square value=36.30; p<0.0001 and Chi-square value=13.86;  
14 p=0.003). In the absence of post-hoc test, it is difficult to individualize differences for LO  
15 diet. In the case of HO, HO-3X curve is clearly under the other curves starting from 3 mpf.  
16 Due to the high mortality observed in fish fed with HO-3X fraction, we decided to anticipate  
17 the sampling of fish fed with HO to 7 mpf instead of the 9 mpf initially planned in order to  
18 avoid the risk of the complete loss of a treatment group. All HO-3X remaining fish and 25  
19 fish from other HO concentrations were then sampled at 7 mpf to allow comparisons.  
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### 30 31 *Global incidence of preneoplastic and neoplastic lesions*

32 A total of 264, 258 and 238 fish fed during 3 to 14 months with a diet containing respectively  
33 PY, HO or LO at 4 concentrations (3 PAH concentrations and one control condition), were  
34 examined microscopically after sectioning and HES staining. Liver was the primary target  
35 organ in PAH contaminated zebrafish with recorded lesions in hepatocytes and bile duct  
36 epithelial cells. In addition to liver, neoplasia also occurred in testis, intestine and pancreas,  
37 although at a relatively low frequency (Table 1).  
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43 Some dissimilarity regarding tumor incidences were identified between PAH fractions (Fig. 2,  
44 left panel). Neoplasm incidences significantly increased with time of exposure to HO and LO  
45 (respectively F=11.92; p<0.001 and F=27.26; p<0.001) but not to PY (Fig. 2), and with  
46 concentration of PY (F=5.07; p=0.002), HO (F=11.34; p<0.001), and LO (F=18.57; p<0.001).  
47 There is an interaction between time and concentration in HO (F=3.09; p=0.010) and in LO  
48 (F=8.06; p<0.001). Considering in more details the evolution of carcinogenesis, at 3 mpf, we  
49 observed neoplasms in PY-3X, LO-0.3X, -1X and -3X (Table 1) with a significant effect of  
50 the concentration (F=6.45; p<0.001) but not of the fraction. At this time point, the number of  
51 tumor was significantly higher in PY-3X than in HO-3X (p=0.015). Due to the high mortality  
52 recorded all along the study in the HO-3X group, experiment was stopped in this group at 7  
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1 mpf, a time when neoplasm incidence reached already 33 % (8 out of 24). At 9 mpf, all  
2 concentrations considered, 17 % (5 out of 29) and 72 % (21 out of 29) of fish exposed to PY  
3 and LO respectively displayed neoplasm compared to 4 % (3 out of 82) in the control fish  
4 groups. An effect of the fraction (F=9.13; p<0.001), of the concentration (F=18.08; p<0.001)  
5 and an interaction between concentration and fraction (F=6.18; p<0.001) were identified at  
6 this time point. In the absence of data for HO-3X group at 9 mpf, we demonstrated a  
7 significant carcinogenic effect for HO-1X and LO-3X diets compared to control (p=0.003 and  
8 p<0.001) and a higher carcinogenic effect for LO-3X compared to PY-3X and for HO-1X  
9 compared to PY-1X (respectively p<0.001 and p=0.002). The carcinogenic effect of LO-1X  
10 was intermediate and could not be differentiated statistically from that of PY-1X or from HO-  
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### 22 *Nature of preneoplastic lesions*

#### 23 - Hepatocellular alteration foci

24 For consistency, only foci of cellular alteration (FCA) of more than 10 hepatocytes were  
25 considered and classified upon their staining with HES as eosinophilia, clear cell and  
26 basophilic foci (Fig 3). Respectively, 5.5 % (11 out of 199), 5.0 % (9 out of 180) and 2.8 % (5  
27 out of 176) FCA were identified after PY, HO or LO exposure, all concentrations considered  
28 (Table 1). The global incidence in control groups was 2.2 % (4 out of 182). No significant  
29 effect of the gender, the age or the fraction could be identified on FCA incidences. Clear cell  
30 foci were globally more frequent (60 % of all observed FCA) and consisted of pale, finely  
31 vacuolated hepatocytes with granular cytoplasm. Eosinophilic foci (24 % of all FCA)  
32 appeared as round or irregular sharply delineated foci of hypereosinophilic slightly enlarged  
33 hepatocytes. Basophilic foci (16 % of all FCA) appeared round and consisted of clusters of  
34 smaller hepatocytes with hyperbasophilic or amphophilic cytoplasm.  
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#### 45 - Biliary epithelium lesions

46 A systematic scoring of biliary epithelium lesions was performed. Bile duct epithelium  
47 appeared normally (score=0) as a monolayered cylindrical or cuboidal epithelium with a very  
48 low proliferation activity as assessed by PCNA labelling (Fig. 4, a-b). Bile duct hyperplasia  
49 (score=1) was a common finding in all zebrafish and consisted of an increased number of  
50 well-differentiated bile ducts with a typical epithelium displaying higher number of mitosis  
51 than in normal ducts (Fig. 4, d-e). The number of fish displaying hyperplastic bile ducts was  
52 stable between 3 and 9-10 months in control groups (34 % for both time points) while the  
53 number of fish with a higher score slightly increased from 3 to 18 %. In contaminated fish,  
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1 the number of fish with a score of 1 slightly decreased from 34 % to 26 % during this time  
2 period, with a parallel global increase from 24 % to 62 % in the number of fish with a higher  
3 score. Microscopically, dysplastic epithelium (score=2) appeared as a multi-layered and  
4 irregularly stratified epithelium and consisted of cells displaying pleomorphic, anisocytosis,  
5 anisokaryosis and high nucleo-cytoplasmic ratio (Fig.4, g). Number of mitotic cells was  
6 focally increased (Fig.4, h). In some samples displaying a dysplastic and highly proliferative  
7 duct epithelium, a few cells appeared elongated with loose intercellular bounds (Fig.4, j-k).  
8 They reached individually the pericanalar stroma through the basal membrane (Fig.4, l) that is  
9 highly evocative of epithelio-mesenchymal transition (score=3). A mean biliary epithelium  
10 score was calculated for each group (Fig. 2, right panel). No significant effect of the fraction  
11 could be detected at 3 mpf in fish exposed to PY and HO but score of fish exposed to LO-1X  
12 and LO-3X were increased compared to control. At 7 mpf, a significant effect of the exposure  
13 to HO was identified for all concentrations compared to control. From 9 mpf, the mean score  
14 ranged [0.1-1.2] in control animals and contrasted with the ones calculated in exposed  
15 animals, ranging [1.3-3.4] (Fig. 2). At 9-10 mpf, a significant effect of the fraction ( $F=10.19$ ;  
16  $p<0.001$ ), and the concentration ( $F=38.83$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) was demonstrated with an interaction  
17 between both factors ( $F=2.32$ ;  $p=0.044$ ). The relative potency could be summarized as follow:  
18 LO-3X > PY-3X, HO-1X> PY-1X and LO-1X > PY-1X ( $p<0.001$ ,  $p=0.002$  and  $p=0.002$   
19 respectively) while potency of HO-1X and LO-1X could not be distinguished. At 14 mpf, an  
20 effect of PY was identified for all concentrations compared to control.

#### 36 - Cholangiofibrosis

37 Bile duct epithelium lies normally on a basal membrane surrounded by scant connective  
38 tissue (Fig.4, c). In our study, the amount of connective tissue around bile ducts was  
39 frequently increased as evidenced in HES sections (Fig. 4, left panel) and this thickening was  
40 associated with the presence of several fibroblasts with a large euchromatic and nucleolated  
41 nucleus indicative of their active state. The collagenous nature of this densified tissue was  
42 confirmed with a specific Picrosirius red stain (Fig 4, right panel). The number of fish  
43 displaying mild to marked pericanalar fibrosis in control groups increased with time from  
44 15 % at 3 mpf to 43 % at 9-10 mpf. Pericanalar fibrosis also increased following exposure to  
45 all contaminated diets from [11-55 %] to [37-100 %] at the same time points (Table 1).  
46 Significant effects of both the fraction, the concentration and an interaction between them  
47 were identified at 3 mpf ( $F=3.52$ ,  $p=0.031$ ;  $F=3.81$ ,  $p=0.011$ ;  $F=2.24$ ,  $p=0.041$  respectively)  
48 and 9-10 mpf ( $F=14.28$ ,  $p<0.001$ ;  $F=25.47$ ,  $p<0.001$ ;  $F=2.87$ ,  $p=0.015$ ). Pericanalar fibrosis  
49 was shown to be associated with bile duct epithelium dysplasia (Chi-squared test,  $p<0.001$ ).  
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2 *Neoplastic lesions*

3 The nature of the 94 observed tumors is indicated in Table 1. The vast majority of tumors  
4 were of epithelial origin except one chondroma and one intestinal stromal tumor, both of  
5 mesenchymal origin and originating in these two cases from the intestinal wall (Table 1).  
6 Most tumors (91 out of 94) were malignant, with visible infiltration of peripheral tissues in  
7 50 % of cases. These tumors are described below. Only 3 tumors were classified as benign,  
8 always consisted of a well-demarcated mass slightly compressing peripheral tissues and were  
9 identified as a chondroma, an adenoma of endocrine pancreas origin and a pneumatic duct  
10 adenoma.  
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12 - Duct carcinoma

13 Nodular proliferation of duct cells was observed in liver or more rarely in pancreas (Fig. 4  
14 and 5). According to their common duct epithelium origin, we chose to indifferently call these  
15 two neoplasms “duct carcinoma” in this report, without considering their hepatic or pancreatic  
16 primary site. This name should reflected more properly their very similar appearance and their  
17 high propensity to infiltrate peripheral tissues that sometimes precluded identification of the  
18 tissue origin of the tumor. Duct cells proliferation and transformation most frequently  
19 occurred in the anterior area of the liver near the emergence of the common bile duct. The  
20 early very invasive behaviour and the abundance of atypias were indicative of their  
21 carcinomatous nature.  
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23 Duct carcinomas formed large tumors, without significant increase in the mean size of tumors  
24 from 3 to 14 mpf. Neoplasms were composed of disorganized clusters of atypical, variably  
25 sized, branching and tortuous ductules and ducts often admixed with abundant proliferating  
26 dense collagenous or myxoid stroma (Fig. 4, m and o and Fig. 5, a). Lining neoplastic  
27 epithelium was usually simple, but in some regular instance was irregularly stratified with  
28 occasional extension through the basement membrane. Neoplastic cells could either be  
29 cohesive and polygonal, reminiscent of their epithelial origin, or isolated and elongated with  
30 fine cytoplasmic processes. The proliferation activity was very high (Fig. 4, n). A spindle cell  
31 proliferation around ducts was frequently associated, sometimes making it difficult to  
32 distinguish between proliferating neoplastic ducts and a highly cellular stroma. Special  
33 staining and immunohistochemical analysis confirmed the presence of scattered epithelial  
34 cells in the stroma, isolated, in little clusters or forming small ductules with a collapsed lumen  
35 (Fig 5, c).  
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37 Neoplasm infiltration first occurred in the surrounding parenchyma and larger tumors in the  
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1 liver additionally extended through the hepatic capsule and invaded directly of adjacent  
2 tissues and organs, including intestine, pancreas and spleen. The only observed form of  
3 distant metastasis was transcoelomic after fragmentation of the primary tumor into the  
4 peritoneal cavity with occasional implantation and invasion into abdominal fat, pancreas and  
5 peritoneal wall. No vascular emboli or distant metastasis in tissues away from the  
6 pleuroperitoneal cavity could be observed.  
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10 Duct carcinomas were observed in control and exposed fish from 3 to 14 mpf. Global  
11 incidences ranged [0-3.2 %] in control fish compared to incidences of 7.4 %, 14.6 % and  
12 23.4 % in fish exposed to PY, HO and LO respectively with a significant effect of the fraction  
13 (Chi-squared test, respectively  $p=0.012$ ,  $p<0.001$  and  $p<0.001$ ).  
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#### 16 - Seminoma

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18 In the present study, seminomas were the second most commonly found tumor with 7  
19 occurrences. These tumors were observed in fish exposed to PAHs at 1X and 3X  
20 concentrations all fractions considered. Fish age at the time of observation ranged from 3 to 9  
21 mpf. **Seminoma was not observed** in non-exposed fish and no significant difference of  
22 incidence could be identified between the 3 PAH fractions. These neoplasms were often very  
23 large, always exhibiting a very aggressive behaviour, invading large parts of the body cavity  
24 and infiltrating abdominal tissues. The tumors were solid with only a few lobules containing  
25 spermatocytes and spermatids (Fig 6). A severe inflammatory infiltration was frequently  
26 associated.  
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#### 38 *Sporadic findings*

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40 Other lesions included developmental lesions of the heart, the eyes and the organs of  
41 reproduction. These results not directly related to the carcinogenic study will be reported  
42 elsewhere (Lucas et al. submitted; Vignet et al. **In press**). Some inflammatory lesions,  
43 predominantly macrophage aggregates and granulomas, were sporadically found in the body  
44 cavity or in the ovary. **Embryonic nephrons that stained more basophilic than mature ones**  
45 were infrequently and undifferentially observed in exposed and control fish. Hamartoma of  
46 pseudobranch was observed in 2 fish, near the normal pseudobranch. This was a well-  
47 differentiated redundant pseudobranchial tissue.  
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#### 56 *Genotoxic effects*

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58 Genotoxicity was evaluated at 2 mpf using comet assays to assess repairable DNA damages  
59 and at 9 mpf using MN assay to assess non-repairable DNA damages.  
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1 Due to the small size of the fish exposed to the HO and LO diets, blood was very difficult to  
2 collect and, as a consequence, the number of nuclei available on the slides was too small to be  
3 significant. By applying the comet assay in fish fed with the PY-contaminated diet, no  
4 difference in the extent of DNA damage was observed compared to the control group  
5 (p=0.37), whatever the concentration (Fig. 7).  
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8 Micronuclei analysis was performed on blood cells of adult zebrafish fed for 9 months with  
9 PY-, LO- or HO-contaminated diets (Fig. 8). MN frequency ranged from 0.07 to 0.33 ‰ with  
10 no significant difference (ANOVA, p>0.05) between fractions. A relatively high inter-  
11 individual variability was observed.  
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### 16 17 18 *Metabolism activation and kinetics*

19 EROD activity results are presented in table 3. No significant effect of the exposure to PAHs  
20 was detected (Tukey test) except between control group and fish fed with diet containing HO-  
21 0.3X (p=0.020) in which EROD activity was increased (fold-change=1.9).  
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25 To investigate the possible consequence of sampling procedure on comet and EROD assays,  
26 the kinetics of *cyp1a* and *ahr2* expression after feeding were analysed on PY-3X larvae.  
27 Expression of *cyp1a* was measured following a 24 h starvation period (0 hprf) of larvae  
28 exposed to PY-3X and of control larvae (Fig. 9). At 0 hprf, *cyp1a* expression was only slightly  
29 up-regulated in PY-3X fish (fold-change=1.3; p<0.001). This expression was highly up-  
30 regulated in refed PY-3X larvae compared to starved PY-3X larvae from 2 to 8 hprf (fold-  
31 change range [5.5-11.3]; p<0.001). No significant difference was observed in expression  
32 levels at 10 hprf (p=0.177). At 24 hprf, *cyp1a* expression was not different from the basal  
33 level (0 hprf) (p=0.325).  
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41 Regarding, the aryl hydrocarbon receptor 2 (*ahr2*), no significant expression change was  
42 revealed after a contaminated refeeding from 0 to 4 hprf (p=0.346, p=0.325, p=0.825 and  
43 p=0.325) and from 10 to 24 hprf (p=0.830 and p=0.177). However, *ahr2* expression was 0.9-  
44 fold repressed in refed PY-3X larvae at 6 and 8 hprf respectively (p<0.001).  
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### 51 **Discussion**

52 Despite numerous toxicological studies on individual PAHs, little is known about effects of  
53 long-term **dietary** exposure to PAHs as mixtures containing dozens of molecules that are  
54 effectively encountered in environmental situations. This is in particular due to the fact that  
55 wild-caught fish could have been exposed to other carcinogenic compounds or to other  
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confounding factors. The aim of the present study is to document carcinogenic and genotoxic effects induced by exposure to PAHs from the first meal and maintained afterwards.

### *Neoplasm incidences*

In order to exhaustively describe here all preneoplastic and neoplastic lesions and characterize the full range of carcinogen responsiveness of all tissues, serial step sections of the entire body of exposed and control zebrafish were observed microscopically. Descriptive studies of chemically induced tumors in zebrafish have frequently omitted in the past to report complete data concerning fish strain, fish age or spectrum of investigated tissue. Additionally, naturally occurring tumors in zebrafish have only been identified in a few published works (Spitsbergen et al. 1997b; Smolowitz et al. 2002; Spitsbergen et al. 2012). This information would be useful to compare results between carcinogenesis studies. Reported incidences of spontaneous neoplasia in zebrafish colonies must therefore be taken cautiously but always seems to be relatively low, evaluated to approximately 1 % (Spitsbergen et al. 1997a). An incidence of 4 % was found in our control fish, which is in agreement with this low basal level. **The slightly higher rate observed in this study may be due to the genetic background. Indeed albeit being established as TU colony, some sporadic leopard or longfin phenotypes were observed suggesting that some *Tupfel* (TL) genetic background has been introduced at some time.**

After chronic exposure of seven or more months to PAH fractions, incidences of neoplasia ranged from 17 % to 72 % with the lowest carcinogenic effect observed with the PY fraction and the highest with the HO one. A clear concentration-effect relationship was additionally demonstrated for all tested fractions. As a comparison with two of the most potent PAHs characterized to date, a maximal incidence of 23 % of zebrafish developing neoplasia was reported after dietary exposure to 1,000 ppm of DMBA for 12 weeks from 2 months of age (Spitsbergen et al. 2000a) and no increase of the incidence with time. **In the present study, the carcinogen exposures started during the early highly sensitive stages in the life of zebrafish whereas previous dietary studies published by Spitsbergen et al. did not start until fish were juveniles 2 months of age. Medaka or even trout are believed to be much more sensible to carcinogenic effects in similar conditions retaining carcinogen sensitivity in dietary studies begun later in life (Reddy et al. 1999a).**

### *Effect latency*

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Several times of exposure were documented here for the first time. The survival was decreased as soon as 3 mpf in the high concentration group of fish exposed to HO, confirming the already observed higher toxicity of this fraction (Le Bihanic et al. Submitted-a; Le Bihanic et al. Submitted-b; Vignet et al. **In press**). Effect on survival was only detected afterwards in fish exposed to LO and no effect on survival was identified in fish exposed to PY. Regarding tumors, neoplasms were observed as soon as 3 mpf only after exposure to the highest level of PY or LO.

### *Target tissues and cells*

In the few published data, the most commonly reported spontaneous neoplasms in zebrafish are epithelial, including seminoma, adenoma of exocrine pancreas and hepatocellular adenoma and less frequently intestinal adenocarcinoma (Spitsbergen et al. 2000a; Smolowitz et al. 2002). In our study, a large majority of neoplasms were tumors of epithelial origin and corresponded mainly to duct carcinomas and to seminomas. Mesenchymal tumors were very few as previously reported (Spitsbergen et al. 2000a).

Our study identified liver as the main target organ after a chronic dietary exposure to PAHs. This is in accordance with other reports identifying liver tumors (including those derived from hepatocellular, bile duct, blood vessel and Kupffer cells) as predominant following exposure of various fish species to DMBA or BaP (Bailey et al. 1984; Hendricks et al. 1985; Fong et al. 1993; Bailey et al. 1996; Bunton 1996; Reddy et al. 1999b; Wills et al. 2010). Rare gastric tumors were additionally observed with lower incidence in the rainbow trout (Fong et al. 1993) and similarly, very few intestinal tumors were recorded here in the agastric zebrafish. In PAH-contaminated sites, a high prevalence of hepatic preneoplastic or neoplastic lesions was also reported in mummichog (*Fundulus heteroclitus*) (Vogelbein et al. 1990), North American winter flounders (*Pleuronectes americanus*) and European flounders (*Platichthys flesus*) (Murchelano and Wolke 1985, 1991; Cachot et al. 2013).

The large predominance of duct carcinomas of hepatic origin described here contrasts with the neoplasm incidences reported by Spitsbergen et al. in juvenile zebrafish (2 mpf) dietary exposed to DMBA for 4 months (500 to 1,000 ppm) (Spitsbergen et al. 2000a). In this last study, intestinal and gill neoplasms were identified with respective incidences of 7 and 4 %. Only 3 duct carcinomas, originating from the pancreas, and no liver neoplasm were observed. The main distinctive parameters with our study, that are age of onset of exposure and nature of the PAH, may explain the discrepancy in target tissues (Spitsbergen et al. 2000b). **The influence of the genetic background of our fish colony and the aquaculture systems used in**

1 our facility cannot be ruled out. Indeed as indicated previously, it is likely that some TL  
2 genetic background contaminated the TU background. TL line which has been shown to have  
3 a high rate of spontaneous bile duct hyperplasia as observed here (Kent et al. 2012;  
4 Spitsbergen et al. 2012) may have a higher sensitivity to biliary neoplasia upon exposure to  
5 carcinogens. In liver, in addition to bile duct tumors, FCA were sporadically seen in our study  
6 but their global low incidence precludes any correlation with the exposure to PAHs. None  
7 liver adenoma or hepatocarcinoma was observed although FCA is considered to represent a  
8 morphological appearance associated with the progression of hepatic neoplasia in rodents and  
9 fish (Hendricks et al. 1995; Boorman et al. 1997; Thoolen et al. 2010; Hobbie et al. 2012). In  
10 mummichog subjected to acute aqueous expositions to BaP, incidences of both FCA and  
11 hepatocellular carcinomas have been described to be increased (Wills et al. 2010).

12 The histologic appearance of tumors in zebrafish is similar to that of the human counterpart,  
13 including increased frequency of mitosis and atypical nuclei (Goessling et al. 2007). A  
14 comparison of the human and zebrafish genomes reveals the conservation of cancer-relevant  
15 oncogenes, tumor suppressor genes, and cell cycle genes (Amatruda et al. 2002). The  
16 histologic similarity and genetic conservation suggests that the genetic mechanisms  
17 underlying carcinogenesis in zebrafish may be highly similar to those in humans. A recent  
18 study compared the gene expression signatures in chemically induced liver tumors in  
19 zebrafish to human hepatocellular carcinoma (Lam et al. 2006). Another study analysed  
20 deregulation of genes involved in cell cycle, apoptosis, DNA repair, and metastasis in  
21 zebrafish liver tumors and revealed that the genetic changes in both species were significantly  
22 correlated (Goessling et al. 2007).

### 23 *Carcinogenesis mechanisms*

24 The carcinogenic mechanisms implicated in duct tumor progression were not elucidated here  
25 despite several investigations. In particular no evidences of repairable or irreversible DNA  
26 damages were observed. Unfortunately, genotoxic effects were only documented in  
27 haemocytes due to their higher accessibility for sampling using comet and micronucleus  
28 assays. We cannot rule out 1) the occurrence of DNA damages such as DNA-adducts and 2)  
29 that DNA damages may have occurred in other tissues, particularly in bile ducts whose cells  
30 displayed preneoplastic lesions correlated to the fraction and the dose of exposure and from  
31 which most neoplasms derived. Indeed, PAHs are known to be bioavailable and quickly  
32 metabolized by fish hepatic enzymes as confirmed here by the kinetic of *cyp1a* expression  
33 after feeding or, in other studies, by the rapid production of biliary PAH-metabolites after  
34

1 exposure (Wessel et al. 2010; Le Du-Lacoste et al. 2013). Among these metabolites, 3-  
2 hydroxybenzo[a]pyrene is believed to be one of the most genotoxic (Aas et al. 2000; Ruddock  
3 et al. 2003; Brinkmann et al. 2010; Le Du-Lacoste et al. 2013). Several studies have also  
4 reported the genotoxicity of compounds such as nitrogen-, sulfur- and/or oxygen-containing  
5 PAHs or their alkyl substituted analogues (Burczynski and Penning 2000; Binet et al. 2002;  
6 Francioni et al. 2007; Ramos de Rainho et al. 2013).

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10 All the three fractions tested here have genotoxic potential. In the case of the PY-  
11 contaminated diet, genotoxicity may be driven by high molecular weight PAHs such as BaP  
12 from which metabolites were quantified in larvae exposed to this diet (Vignet et al. **In press**).  
13 Regarding the LO-contaminated diet, genotoxicity should rather be due to the high level of  
14 alkylated PAHs as genotoxicity of these compounds and their metabolites have already been  
15 documented (Burczynski and Penning 2000; Francioni et al. 2007). As for HO-contaminated  
16 diet, it displayed high levels of both heavy PAHs, including BaP, and methylated ones.  
17 Additionally we cannot exclude the role of compounds that were not quantified here as some  
18 recent studies focused on the important role of uncharacterized polar contaminants such as  
19 nitro-PAHs, aromatic amines and sulfur compounds in the global mutagenicity of PAH  
20 fractions (Amat et al. 2004; Wahidulla and Rajamanickam 2010; Di Giorgio et al. 2011).  
21 **Regarding other compounds, aromatic fractions were prepared with methods excluding the**  
22 **co-purification of heavy metals. PCBs and some other organic compounds are copurified with**  
23 **PAHs, but there were no PCBs in the petrogenic fractions. For the PY fraction extracted from**  
24 **Oissel sediment, previous reports indicated that PCBs were present at very low concentrations**  
25 **( $\sum$ PCBs=70 ng.g<sup>-1</sup> and dioxin-like congener CB118=8.4 ng.g<sup>-1</sup> (Cachot et al. 2006)). We**  
26 **therefore concluded that the carcinogenic effects reported here were due to the PAHs present**  
27 **in the different fractions.**

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43 The chronic exposure of bile duct cells to some of these compounds may be responsible from  
44 their higher rate of proliferation depicted in the present study but also from the formation of  
45 DNA base oxidation or DNA adducts resulting in the induction of neoplasms originating from  
46 these specific cells. Noteworthy, genotoxicity assessed by the comet assay was demonstrated  
47 to be higher in trout larvae exposed for 10 days to HO fractions compared to larvae exposed  
48 to LO or PY fractions (Le Bihanic et al. Submitted-b). This result would be in accordance  
49 with the higher carcinogenic potency of the HO fraction highlighted in the present study.

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1 an increase in cellular proliferation (Winn et al. 2000; Cohen and Arnold 2011). Although  
2 some PAH-metabolites are well-known DNA-reactive carcinogens at high levels, our results  
3 at lower levels suggest that some PAHs might chronically increase the duct cell proliferation  
4 rate. In accordance to this hypothesis, it has been recently described in Medaka, the induction  
5 of TGF- $\beta$ 1 expression after dimethylnitrosamine exposure in some liver cells, including  
6 preductular epithelial cells. TGF- $\beta$ 1 expression results in collagenous matrix deposition,  
7 spindle cell proliferation and hepatocellular and biliary carcinomas (Hobbie et al. 2012). In  
8 accordance to this work, we found some collagenous deposits around bile ducts of fish  
9 exposed to PAHs eliciting a progressive thickening of the pericanalar space. Other  
10 mechanisms, like epigenetic alterations and DNA methylation alterations, may have also  
11 contributed to carcinogenesis without DNA-adduct formation by specific silencing of tumor  
12 suppressor gene expression or by aberrant activation of tumor-promoting genes (Oliveira et  
13 al. 2007; Pogribny and Beland 2012).

14 Taken together these results indicated that chronic dietary exposures of zebrafish to  
15 environmentally relevant doses and mixtures of PAHs elicited carcinogenic events with a high  
16 frequency and in a narrow range of tissues. Due to their invasive behaviour, tumor growth had  
17 detrimental effects on adult fish survival. Despite their very contrasted compositions,  
18 pyrolytic and petrogenic mixtures were similar regarding the array of induced preneoplastic  
19 and neoplastic lesions suggesting shared carcinogenic mechanisms.

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#### 47 **Figure legends**

48 **Table 1** Incidence of preneoplastic and neoplastic lesions in zebrafish dietary exposed to  
49 4 concentrations and 3 fractions of PAHs  
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51 **Table 2** Specific primer sequences for target genes measured by real-time PCR  
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53

54 **Table 3** Mean EROD activity in whole fish exposed to 4 concentrations and 3 fractions of  
55 PAHs (N=3 to 4 in each group)  
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1 **Figure 1** Survival of adults after exposure to PAH fractions. Kaplan-Meier survival plots are  
2 presented indicating survival rates for each fraction and concentration. Note that because of  
3 the high mortality occurring in the HO exposure, all the remaining HO-3X fish were sampled  
4 for histology analysis, at 6 mpf. This explains why the curve stops at 180 days. Log-rank  
5 (Mantel-Cox) test indicated significant differences for HO survival rates (Chi-square  
6 value=36.30;  $p < 0.0001$ ) and LO (Chi-square value=13.86;  $p = 0.003$ ) but not PY (Chi-square  
7 value=0.80;  $p = 0.849$ )  
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16 **Figure 2** Neoplasm incidence (left panel) and biliary epithelium mean score (right panel) of  
17 zebrafish exposed to various concentrations and fractions of PAHs. Mean scores are mean  $\pm$   
18 SD. Different letters indicate that values differ significantly ( $p < 0.05$ )  
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23 **Figure 3** Hepatic parenchyma of zebrafish exposed to various concentrations and fractions of  
24 PAHs. (a) Normal hepatic parenchyma of a control fish exposed to control. (b) Clear cell foci  
25 of cellular alteration (FCA) in a fish exposed to PY-0.3X, 14 mpf. (c) Eosinophilic FCA in a  
26 fish exposed to PY-3X, 9 mpf. (d) Basophilic FCA in a fish exposed to LO-3X, 3 mpf. (a-d)  
27 Haematoxylin-Eosin-Saffron. Bars = 100  $\mu\text{m}$  (a, b, c) or 50  $\mu\text{m}$  (d)  
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34 **Figure 4** Bile duct of zebrafish exposed to various concentrations and fractions of PAHs. A  
35 semi-quantitative score (0 to 4) was attributed for each fish regarding bile duct epithelial  
36 lesions (left panel) and proliferation activity (middle panel). A second score (0 to 4) reflected  
37 the pericanalar amount of connective tissue (right panel). Contrasting with the normal  
38 appearance of bile ducts (a-c), hyperplastic ducts appeared with numerous mitotic cells (d,  
39 open arrowhead and e), sometimes surrounded with a thickened layer (\*) of connective tissue  
40 (f). Dysplastic ducts were multi-layered with cellular atypias (g) and with a mild proliferation  
41 activity (h). During epithelio-mesenchymal transition, some epithelial cells appeared  
42 elongated, loosely attached to other epithelial cells (j-k, arrowhead) and disrupting basal  
43 membrane (l, arrowhead). Bile duct carcinomas (m) were composed of clusters and cords of  
44 neoplastic cells (arrowheads), sometimes with tubular differentiation. The proliferation  
45 activity was very high (n). Neoplastic cells were scattered in an abundant collagenic stroma  
46 (n, \*). (left panel) Haematoxylin-Eosin-Saffron. (middle panel) Immunolabelling of the  
47 Proliferating Cell Nuclear Antigen. (right panel) Picrosirius red. (a-o) Bars = 10  $\mu\text{m}$   
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**Figure 5** Duct carcinoma of zebrafish exposed to various concentrations and fractions of PAHs. (a) Bile duct carcinoma (black arrowhead), also called cholangiocarcinoma, in the liver (L) of a fish exposed to PY-3X, 14 mpf. The tumor breached parietal peritoneum (arrows) and infiltrated peripheral tissues. The neoplastic cells sometimes formed tubules (black arrowhead) in a loose connective stroma rich in inflammatory cells. Note the normal adjacent bile duct (open arrowhead). (b) Pancreatic duct carcinoma (black arrowhead) in a fish exposed to LO-0.3X, 9 mpf. (c) Bile duct carcinoma in the liver of a fish exposed to HO-3X, 7 mpf. Cytoplasm of neoplastic cells was positive for cytokeratin, indicative of their epithelial origin. Some isolated neoplastic cells could be identified (arrow). (a, b) Haematoxylin-Eosin-Saffron. (c) Pancytokeratin immunohistolabelling. Bars = 100  $\mu\text{m}$  (a, b) or 50  $\mu\text{m}$  (c)

**Figure 6** Spermatocytic seminoma in a zebrafish exposed to PY-1X, 9 mpf. Haematoxylin-Eosin-Saffron. Bar = 50  $\mu\text{m}$

**Figure 7** Mean tail DNA value as an indicator of DNA fragmentation level in fish exposed to various concentrations of a pyrolytic fraction (N=12 to 15 in each group)

**Figure 8** Micronuclei frequency (%) in haemocytes of adult zebrafish fed with PAH-contaminated diet for 9 months. No significant differences were observed between treatment groups (ANOVA,  $p > 0.05$ , N=3)

**Figure 9** Expression kinetics of genes in 16 dpf larvae exposed to PY-3X spiked diet demonstrating an induction of *cyp1a* levels (a) and a repression of *ahr2* levels (b) following nutritional/starvation assay. Data are given in relative expression mean  $\pm$  SEM. \* denote significant differences as compared to control condition at  $t_0$  and their respective starved condition for other analysis time ( $p < 0.001$ ). Stars placed at the top of markers indicate an up-regulation and below, a down-regulation

**Supplementary Table 1** PAHs concentration in used aromatic fractions ( $\mu\text{g.g}^{-1}$  of fraction; mean  $\pm$  SD)

**Supplementary Table 2** Detailed concentration of individual PAHs in produced diets ( $\text{ng.g}^{-1}$  food; mean  $\pm$  SD; N=4-7)

Table1

Exposition			Fish		Preneoplastic lesions		Neoplastic lesions				
			n	Sex ratio M/F %M	Pericanalar fibrosis		Mesenchymal tumor	Adenoma	Duct carcinoma	Seminoma	
% mild to marked	FCA										
PAH mixture	PY	0	3	20	65%	13%	2/20			0/15	
		0	9	30	27%	21%	1/30			0/28	
		0	14	9	33%	33%	0/9			0/9	
	0.3	3	20	47%	23%	0/19			0/13		
		9	31	42%	37%	1/31			3/27		
	0.3	14	21	43%	58%	2/19	1/21 CHD		1/17		
		1	3	20	80%	15%	1/19		0/13		
	1	9	30	40%	39%	1/30	1/30 IST	1/30 EPA	0/28		
		14	20	35%	65%	1/20			0/20		
	3	3	20	95%	44%	0/20			2/18		2/20
9		30	57%	85%	2/29			4/27		1/30	
3	14	13	38%	85%	0/12			3/13			
HO	0	3	20	85%	21%	0/20			0/19		
		7	25	48%	0%	0/23			0/21		
		10	22	91%	41%	0/22			2/22		
	0.3	3	20	63%	33%	0/19			0/18		
		7	25	56%	20%	2/25			0/25		
	0.3	10	27	56%	78%	4/27		1/27 PDA	2/27		
		1	3	20	89%	11%	0/19		0/19		
	1	7	25	52%	48%	0/24			3/23		2/25
		10	29	61%	86%	1/29			13/29		
	3	3	20	80%	8%	1/13			0/13		
7		25	70%	29%	1/24			8/24			
LO	0	3	28	43%	11%	0/28			0/27		
		9	30	30%	63%	1/30			1/30		
	0.3	3	31	42%	29%	0/31			1/31		
		9	30	50%	63%	0/30			4/30		
	1	3	29	28%	55%	0/29			2/29		
		9	30	37%	90%	1/30			9/29		
	3	3	30	48%	52%	2/27			4/27		
		9	30	55%	100%	0/29			21/29		2/30
<b>Total</b>			<b>760</b>	<b>52%</b>							

CHD: chondroma; EPA: endocrine pancreas adenoma; FCA: foci of cellular alteration; IST: intestinal stromal tumor; PDA: pneumatic duct adenoma

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Target gene	Accession Number	Primer (5' → 3')
<i>eef1</i> (eukariotic elongation factor 1)	NM_131263.1	CAGCTGATCGTTGGAGTCAA <sup>a</sup> /TGTATGCGCTGACTTCCTTG <sup>b</sup>
<i>g6pd</i> (glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase)	BM_182602	GTCCCGAAAGGCTCCACTC <sup>a</sup> /CCTCCGCTTTCCTCTC <sup>b</sup>
<i>β-actin</i> (beta-actin)	NM_131031	CCCAGACATCAGGGAGTGAT <sup>a</sup> /CACAATACCGTGCTCAATGG <sup>b</sup>
<i>cyp1A</i> (cytochrome P4501A)	BC094977	GACAGGCGCTCCTAAAACAG <sup>a</sup> /CTGAACGCCAGACTCTTCC <sup>b</sup>
<i>ahr2</i> (aryl hydrocarbon receptor 2)	NM_131264	GCCTGGGATAAAGGAGGAAG <sup>a</sup> /CAGCTCCACCTGTCCAAAT <sup>b</sup>

a/b, Forward/Reverse primers

Table3

	<b>Control</b>	<b>0.3X</b>	<b>1X</b>	<b>3X</b>
PY	39.5 ± 8.8	94.8 ± 43.2	81.2 ± 33.0	78.8 ± 17.7
HO	27.6 ± 7.8	51.6 ± 5.9 *	37.9 ± 5.5	40.6 ± 10.9
LO	38.3 ± 8.5	53.6 ± 3.4	44.6 ± 4.9	58.9 ± 8.7

\* p<0.05

Figure 1

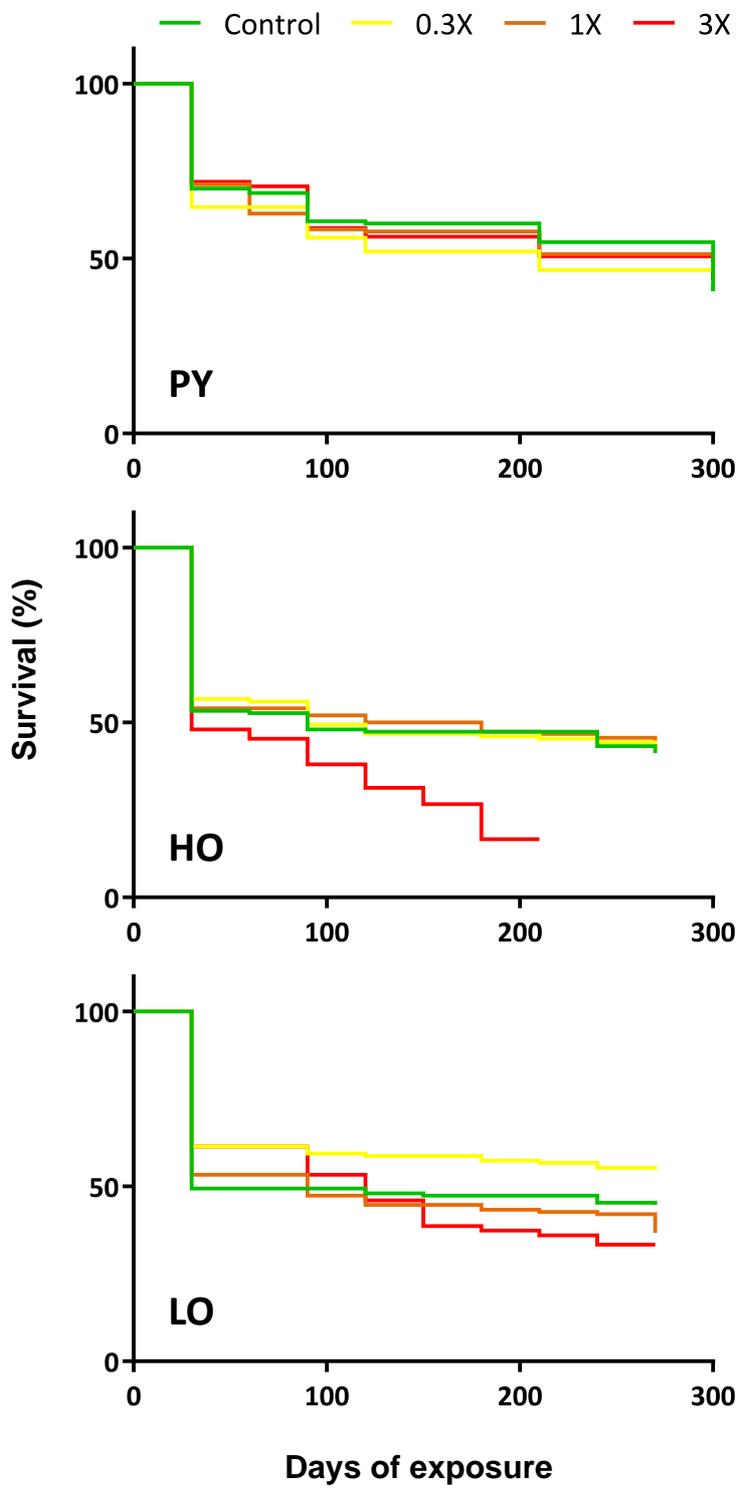


Figure2

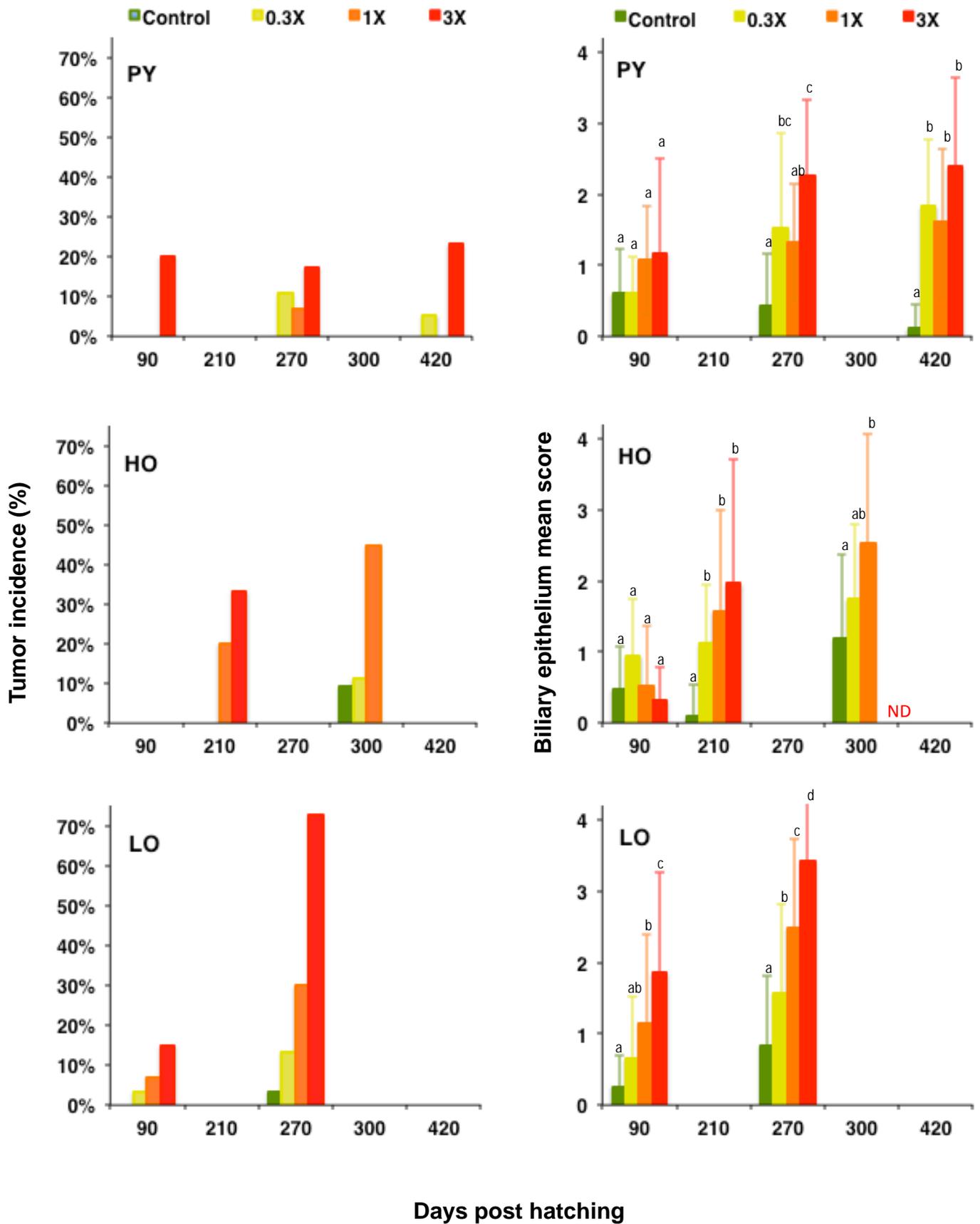


Figure3  
[Click here to download high resolution image](#)

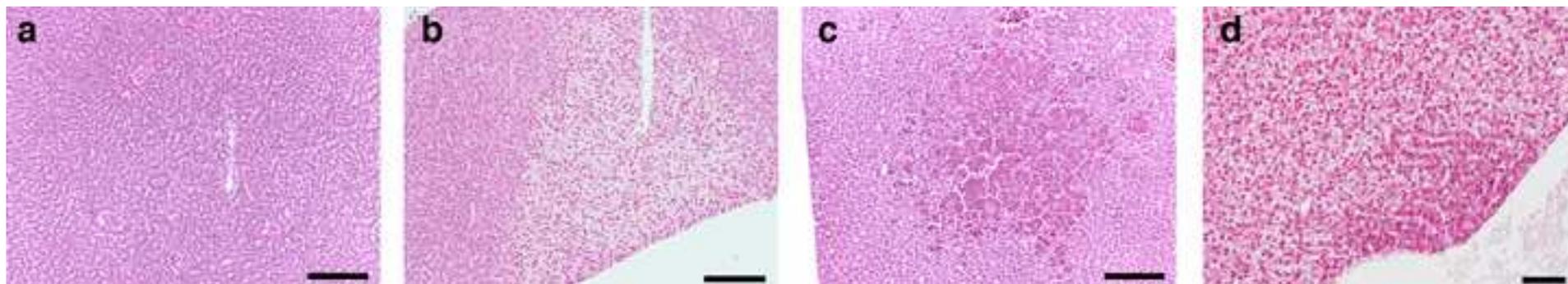


Figure4

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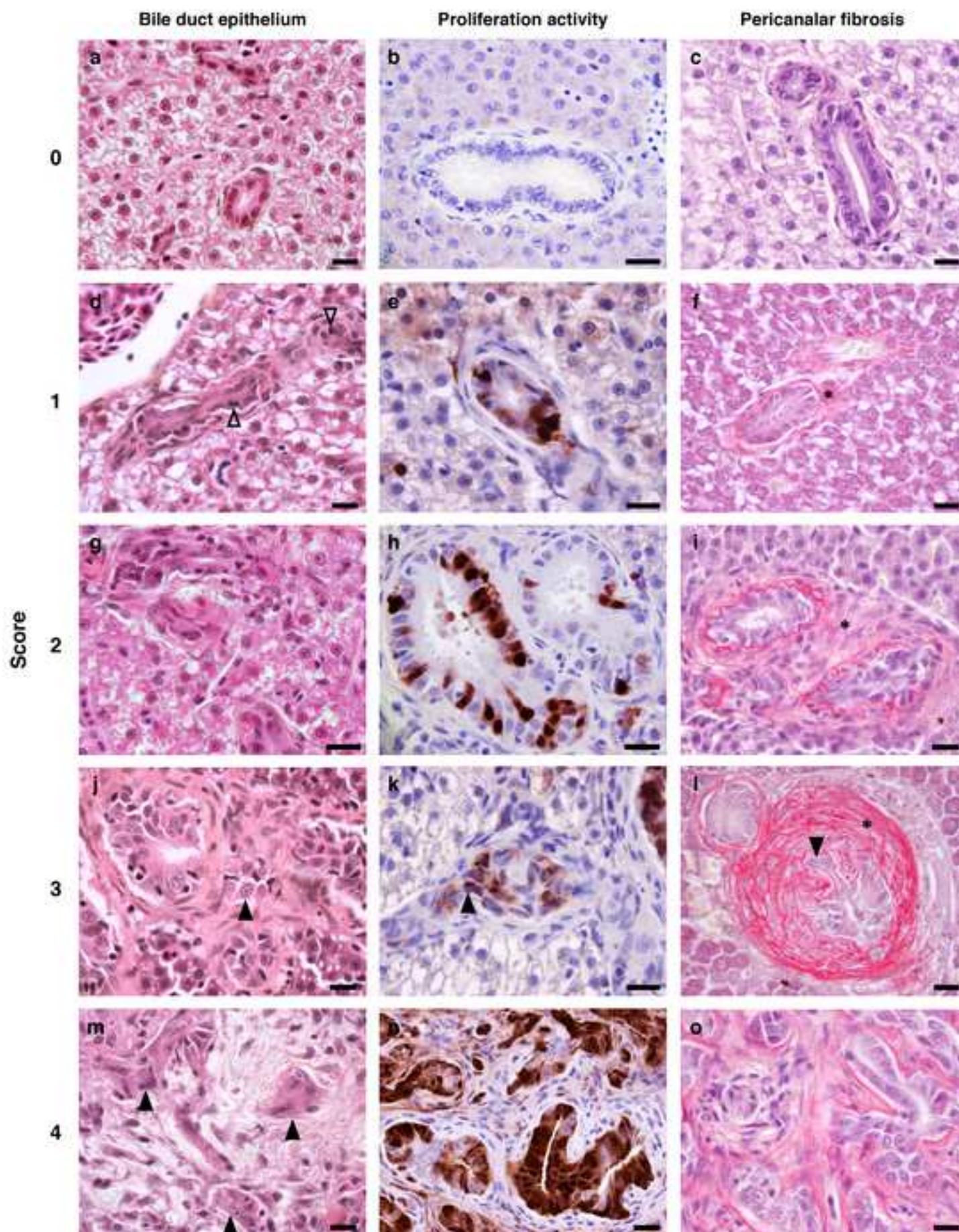


Figure 5  
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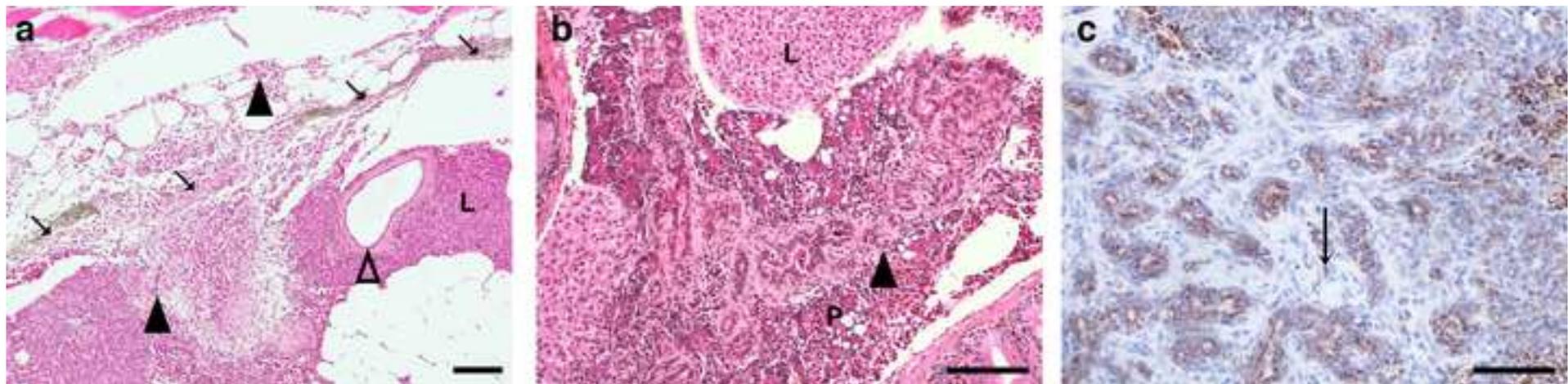


Figure6  
[Click here to download high resolution image](#)

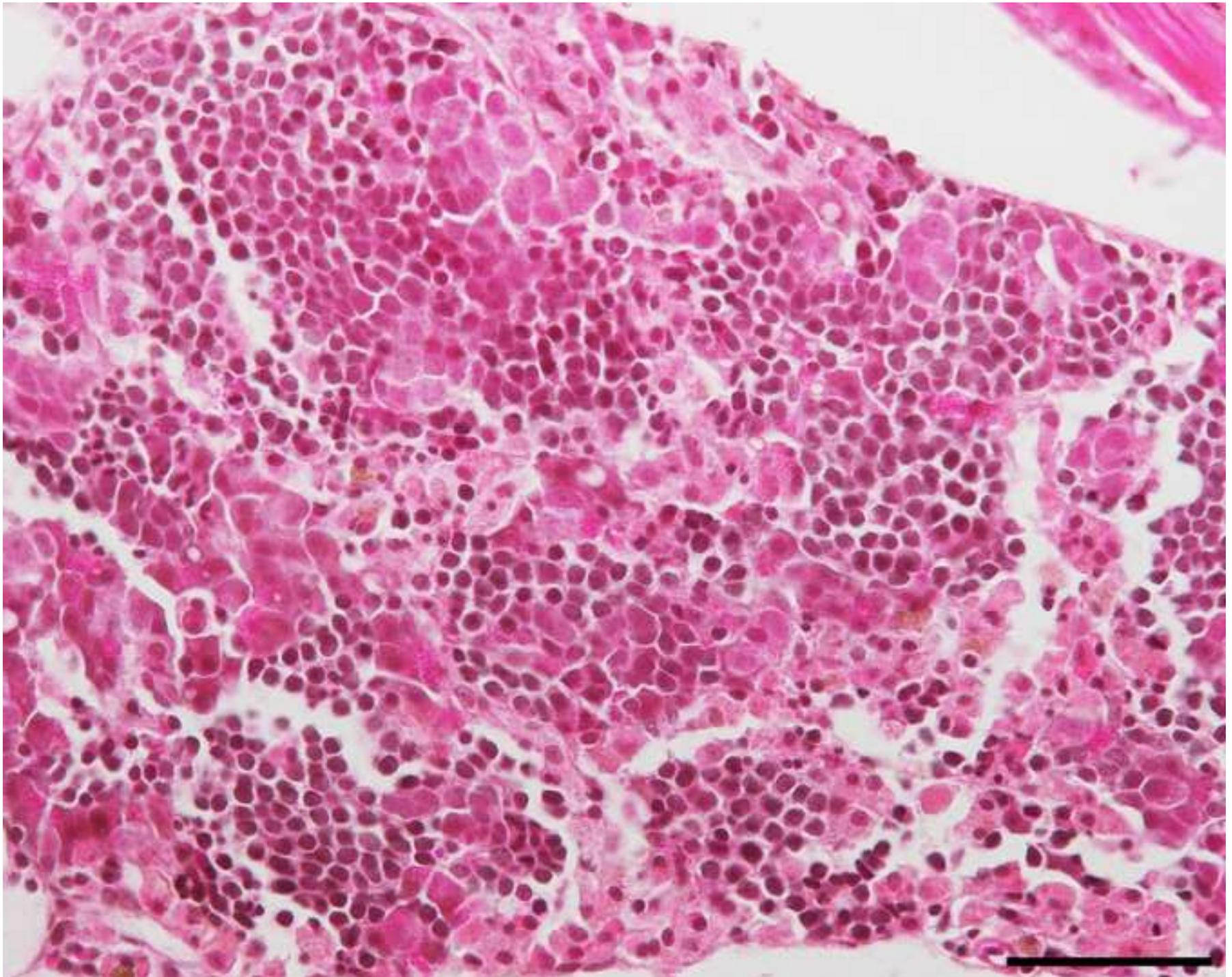


Figure7

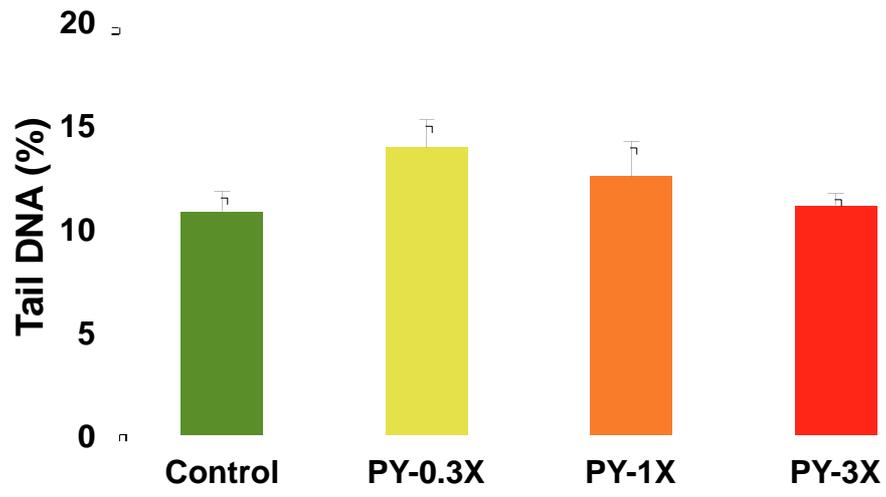


Figure8

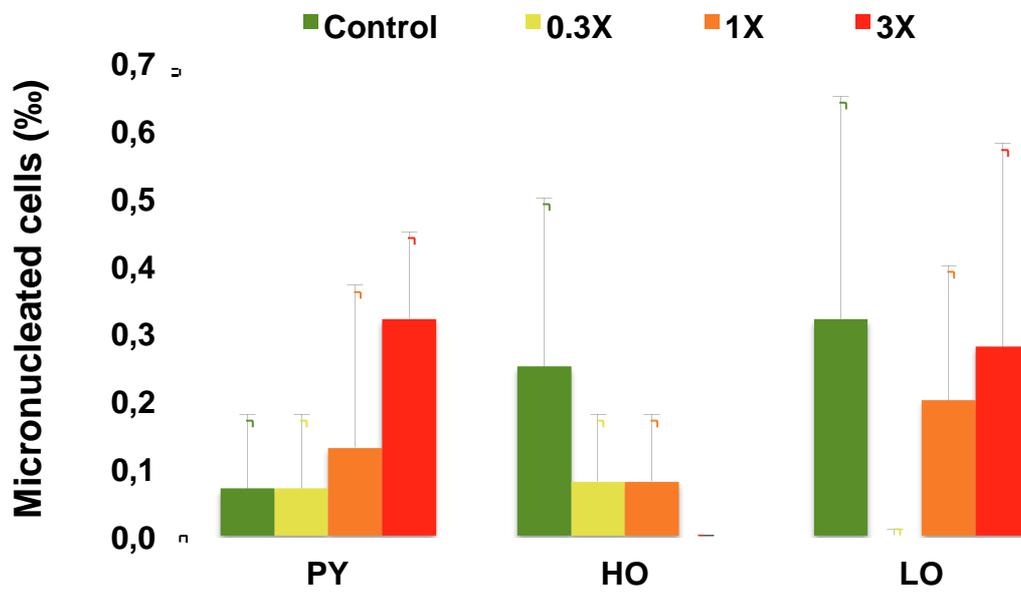
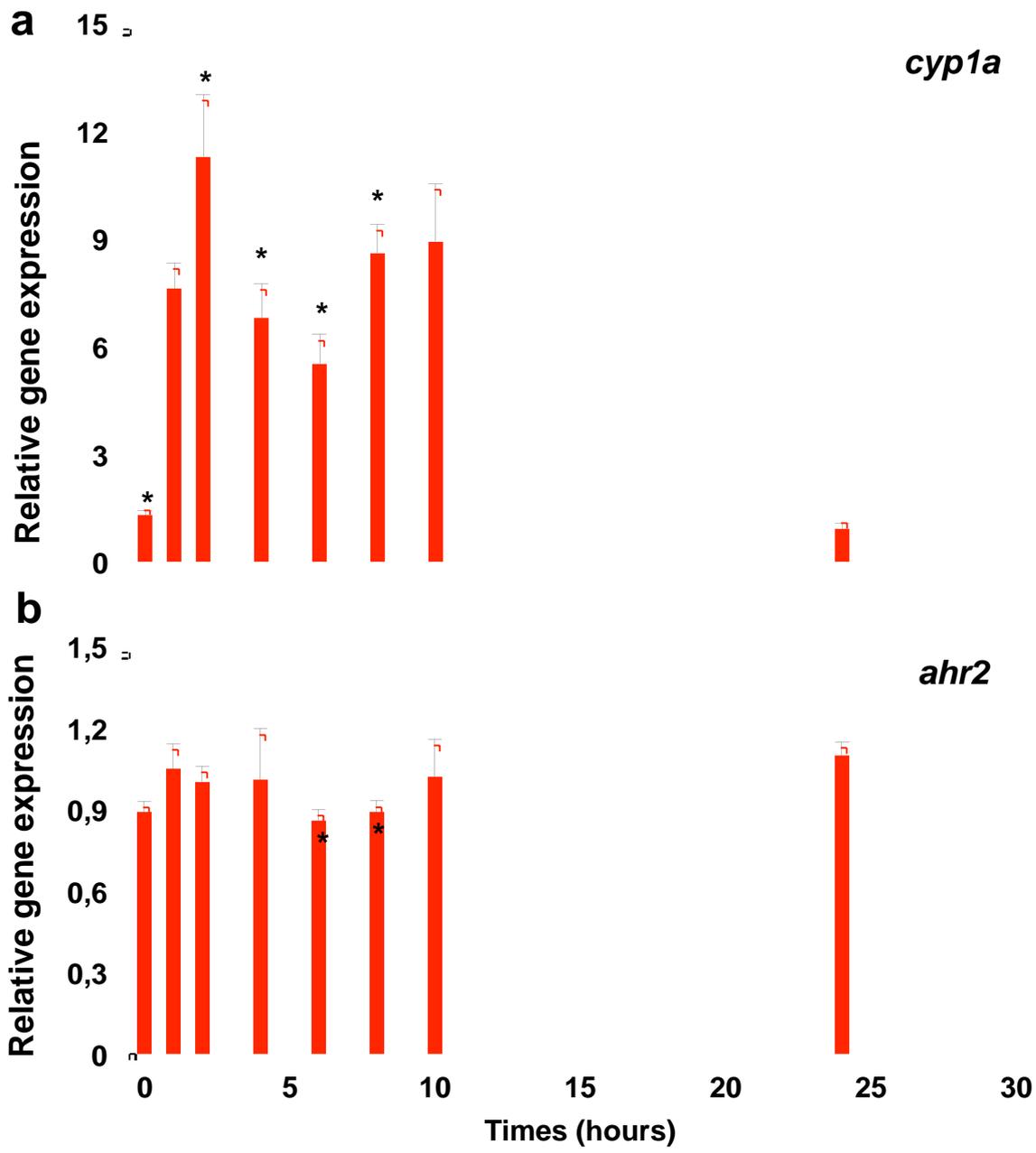


Figure9



**Supplemental Table 1:** PAHs concentration in used aromatic fractions ( $\mu\text{g}\cdot\text{g}^{-1}$  of fraction; mean  $\pm$  SD)

PAHs	Ring #	PY	HO	LO
Naphthalene	2	7.8 $\pm$ 0.5	88.5	133.2 $\pm$ 4
acenaphthylene	2	4.8 $\pm$ 0.4	0.4	15.8 $\pm$ 1.9
Acenaphthene	2	2.8 $\pm$ 0.3	34.9	16 $\pm$ 7.3
Fluorene	2	4.7 $\pm$ 0.4	59.8	38.4 $\pm$ 1.1
Phenanthrene	3	26.4 $\pm$ 2.5	280.7	60.5 $\pm$ 4
Anthracene	3	14.5 $\pm$ 1.1	38.8	1.1 $\pm$ 0.5
Fluoranthene	3	55.7 $\pm$ 4.8	23.2	0.3 $\pm$ 0.2
Pyrene	4	49.5 $\pm$ 4.3	137.6	4.5 $\pm$ 0.4
benzo[a]anthracene	4	33.6 $\pm$ 2.8	112	2 $\pm$ 0.4
triphenylene + chrysene	4	39.9 $\pm$ 3.5	275.5	12 $\pm$ 0.6
benzo[b]naphto[2,1-d]thiophene	4	9.6 $\pm$ 0.6	154.4	21.6 $\pm$ 0.5
benzo[b]fluoranthene+benzo[k]fluoranthene+benzo[j]fluoranthene	4	76.8 $\pm$ 6.8	59.9	2 $\pm$ 0.2
benzo[e]pyrene	5	32.2 $\pm$ 2.9	92.2	4.5 $\pm$ 0.5
benzo[a]pyrene	5	33 $\pm$ 3.1	56.5	0.6 $\pm$ 0.2
Perylene	5	13.3 $\pm$ 1.3	30	1.1 $\pm$ 0.1
indeno(1,2,3-cd)pyrene	5	32 $\pm$ 2.4	5.3	ND
dibenz(ah)anthracene + dibenz(ac)anthracene	5	9.3 $\pm$ 0.7	17.1	ND
benzo[ghi]perylene	6	29.5 $\pm$ 2.4	93.1	1.2 $\pm$ 0.2
<b>Sum PAHs</b>		475.5 $\pm$ 40.7	1560	315 $\pm$ 10.2
2-methylnaphthalene	2	4.9 $\pm$ 0.5	311.9	247.1 $\pm$ 7.3
1-methylnaphthalene	2	2.7 $\pm$ 0.3	187.4	281.6 $\pm$ 14.2
<b>Sum methylnaphthalenes</b>		7.6 $\pm$ 0.8	499.3	528.7 $\pm$ 19.7
3-methylphenanthrene	3	4.9 $\pm$ 0.4	227.3	52.5 $\pm$ 7.3
2-methylphenanthrene	3	6.6 $\pm$ 0.5	291.5	55.1 $\pm$ 1.9
2-methylanthracene	3	2.9 $\pm$ 0.2	83.6	41 $\pm$ 10.8
9-methylphenanthrene + 1-methylanthracene	3	5.8 $\pm$ 0.6	190.7	100.5 $\pm$ 13.3
1-methylphenanthrene	3	3.5 $\pm$ 0.4	182.1	67.6 $\pm$ 15
<b>Sum methylphenanthrenes</b>		20.8 $\pm$ 1.9	975.2	316.7 $\pm$ 12.4
<b>Total PAHs</b>		504 $\pm$ 42.1	3034.5	1160.3 $\pm$ 35.1

ND: not detectable. Value without SD indicated the compound was quantified in only one sample.

**Supplementary Table 2:** Detailed concentrations of individual PAHs in produced diets (ng.g<sup>-1</sup> food; mean ± SD; n=4-7)

	Ring #	PY				HO				LO			
		Control	0.3X	1X	3X	Control	0.3X	1X	3X	Control	0.3X	1X	3X
naphthalene	2	6 ± 6	15 ± 7	56 ± 14	157 ± 74	4 ± 1	37 ± 6	120 ± 16	405 ± 73	3 ± 1	161 ± 21	315 ± 183	1110 ± 472
acenaphthylene	2	1 ± 0	11 ± 2	35 ± 6	114 ± 23	1 ± 0	3 ± 1	3 ± 1	13 ± 13	1 ± 0	15 ± 1	46 ± 2	136 ± 19
acenaphthene	2	2 ± 1	14 ± 12	29 ± 7	89 ± 24	27 ± 26	46 ± 23	74 ± 19	190 ± 17	23 ± 21	37 ± 26	67 ± 68	90 ± 30
fluorene	2	2 ± 1	14 ± 3	42 ± 8	137 ± 28	2 ± 1	34 ± 2	99 ± 8	312 ± 25	2 ± 1	79 ± 1	232 ± 2	677 ± 55
dibenzo[ <i>b,d</i> ]thiophene	2	2 ± 3	11 ± 1	34 ± 5	102 ± 26	0 ± 0	54 ± 3	166 ± 11	546 ± 54	0 ± 0	443 ± 8	1161 ± 18	3489 ± 208
phenanthrene	3	8 ± 4	95 ± 21	291 ± 60	895 ± 213	6 ± 3	152 ± 7	418 ± 32	1279 ± 51	6 ± 4	178 ± 7	492 ± 10	1438 ± 86
anthracene	3	1 ± 0	49 ± 13	159 ± 41	482 ± 165	0 ± 0	22 ± 1	70 ± 2	220 ± 10	0 ± 0	2 ± 1	4 ± 1	42 ± 54
fluoranthene	3	3 ± 3	130 ± 28	523 ± 182	1782 ± 353	2 ± 1	17 ± 1	44 ± 2	145 ± 18	2 ± 1	2 ± 2	1 ± 1	15 ± 17
pyrene	4	3 ± 3	112 ± 24	447 ± 160	1496 ± 311	1 ± 0	80 ± 3	227 ± 19	709 ± 64	2 ± 0	13 ± 2	18 ± 2	73 ± 28
benzo[ <i>a</i> ]anthracene	4	1 ± 0	171 ± 75	581 ± 221	1671 ± 763	0	57 ± 4	172 ± 11	543 ± 29	0	4 ± 1	14 ± 2	49 ± 28
triphenylene + chrysene	4	1 ± 0	215 ± 91	744 ± 290	2144 ± 1032	ND	108 ± 8	336 ± 21	1073 ± 79	ND	30 ± 1	98 ± 4	320 ± 62
benzo[ <i>b</i> ]naphtho[2,1- <i>d</i> ]thiophene	4	5 ± 3	52 ± 26	156 ± 70	472 ± 230	0	56 ± 4	186 ± 8	573 ± 36	0	66 ± 1	194 ± 9	588 ± 30
benzo[ <i>b</i> ]fluoranthene+benzo[ <i>k</i> ]fluoranthene+benzo[ <i>j</i> ]fluoranthene	4	2 ± 1	273 ± 72	868 ± 220	2740 ± 674	2.4	32 ± 2	110 ± 8	363 ± 18	2.4	6 ± 0	20 ± 1	66 ± 7
benzo[ <i>e</i> ]pyrene	5	1 ± 0	109 ± 29	346 ± 86	1084 ± 286	ND	56 ± 3	173 ± 11	536 ± 26	ND	17 ± 0	52 ± 1	160 ± 10
benzo[ <i>a</i> ]pyrene	5	1 ± 0	118 ± 33	373 ± 95	1168 ± 346	0 ± 0	ND	108 ± 6	342 ± 10	0 ± 0	ND	4 ± 1	17 ± 3
perylene	5	1 ± 0	37 ± 9	121 ± 27	390 ± 83	0 ± 0	ND	56 ± 4	172 ± 14	0 ± 0	ND	5 ± 1	13 ± 1
indeno(1,2,3- <i>cd</i> )pyrene	5	0 ± 0	123 ± 41	349 ± 89	1188 ± 265	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
dibenz(ah)anthracene + dibenz(ac)anthracene	5	2 ± 2	32 ± 11	108 ± 43	301 ± 106	0.3	ND	34 ± 2	113 ± 6	0.3	ND	3 ± 1	11 ± 1
benzo[ <i>ghi</i> ]perylene	6	0 ± 0	87 ± 27	268 ± 67	893 ± 191	0 ± 0	ND	146 ± 10	481 ± 12	0 ± 0	ND	12 ± 0	42 ± 12
<b>Sum PAHs</b>		<b>34 ± 6</b>	<b>1670 ± 448</b>	<b>5532 ± 1383</b>	<b>17305 ± 4798</b>	<b>39 ± 30</b>	<b>880 ± 28</b>	<b>2558 ± 169</b>	<b>8082 ± 305</b>	<b>33 ± 26</b>	<b>1053 ± 63</b>	<b>2739 ± 231</b>	<b>8335 ± 854</b>
2-methylnaphthalene	2	8 ± 9	15 ± 3	43 ± 8	116 ± 39	4 ± 1	137 ± 13	396 ± 32	1259 ± 118	4 ± 1	420 ± 19	1036 ± 96	2982 ± 725
1-methylnaphthalene	2	4 ± 6	8 ± 2	22 ± 5	62 ± 21	2 ± 0	86 ± 8	261 ± 20	854 ± 84	2 ± 0	458 ± 19	1147 ± 102	3300 ± 739
<b>Sum methylnaphthalenes</b>		<b>12 ± 15</b>	<b>23 ± 5</b>	<b>65 ± 13</b>	<b>178 ± 60</b>	<b>6 ± 2</b>	<b>223 ± 20</b>	<b>657 ± 52</b>	<b>2113 ± 201</b>	<b>5 ± 1</b>	<b>878 ± 38</b>	<b>2183 ± 197</b>	<b>6282 ± 1465</b>
3-methylphenanthrene	3	2 ± 1	17 ± 3	47 ± 11	149 ± 31	1 ± 0	126 ± 24	326 ± 47	934 ± 160	1 ± 0	114 ± 14	319 ± 38	850 ± 156
2-methylphenanthrene	3	2 ± 0	19 ± 5	60 ± 13	175 ± 41	1 ± 0	149 ± 11	400 ± 28	1172 ± 166	1 ± 0	121 ± 2	340 ± 16	915 ± 124
2-methylanthracene	3	0 ± 0	8 ± 2	25 ± 6	78 ± 18	ND	ND	ND	409 ± 32	ND	ND	ND	32 ± 8
9-methylphenanthrene + 1-methylanthracene	3	1 ± 0	14 ± 4	49 ± 12	165 ± 56	1 ± 0	137 ± 20	360 ± 85	990 ± 206	1 ± 0	283 ± 29	798 ± 42	2226 ± 394
1-methylphenanthrene	3	1 ± 0	12 ± 3	37 ± 11	100 ± 28	0 ± 0	73 ± 8	227 ± 15	617 ± 71	1 ± 0	122 ± 4	348 ± 14	956 ± 97
<b>Sum methylphenanthrenes</b>		<b>7 ± 3</b>	<b>70 ± 15</b>	<b>218 ± 41</b>	<b>668 ± 157</b>	<b>2 ± 2</b>	<b>530 ± 34</b>	<b>1448 ± 144</b>	<b>4122 ± 581</b>	<b>2 ± 2</b>	<b>640 ± 35</b>	<b>1804 ± 67</b>	<b>4957 ± 731</b>
<b>Total PAHs</b>		<b>55 ± 12</b>	<b>1763 ± 468</b>	<b>5816 ± 1433</b>	<b>18151 ± 4983</b>	<b>47 ± 33</b>	<b>1633 ± 71</b>	<b>4663 ± 360</b>	<b>14317 ± 813</b>	<b>40 ± 29</b>	<b>2572 ± 96</b>	<b>6726 ± 278</b>	<b>19574 ± 1945</b>

ND: not detectable