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Baptiste Mathon, Martial Ferréol, Marina Coquery, J.M. Choubert, Jean-Marc Chovelon, et al.. Direct photodegradation of 36 organic micropollutants under simulated solar radiation: Comparison with free-water surface constructed wetland and influence of chemical structure. *Journal of Hazardous Materials*, 2021, 407, pp.124801. <10.1016/j.jhazmat.2020.124801>. <hal-03128101>

HAL Id: hal-03128101

<https://hal.science/hal-03128101v1>

Submitted on 20 Nov 2024

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Direct photodegradation of 36 organic micropollutants under simulated solar radiation: comparison with free-water surface constructed wetland and influence of chemical structure

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Citation: Mathon, B., Ferreol, M., Coquery, M., Choubert, J.M., Chovelon, J.M., Miège, C. (2021).

Direct photodegradation of 36 organic micropollutants under simulated solar radiation: Comparison with free-water surface constructed wetland and influence of chemical structure, Journal of Hazardous Materials, 407, 124801,

Abstract

Micropollutants such as pharmaceuticals and pesticides are still found in treated municipal effluent and are discharged into the natural environment. Natural direct photodegradation may be one pathway for removing these micropollutants in treatment processes such as free-water surface constructed wetlands (CW). This work was set out to evaluate the half-life ($t_{1/2}$) of direct photodegradation of 36 micropollutants under controlled conditions of light exposure close to solar radiation. The results allowed to classify the micropollutants into three groups (fast, medium and slow). Seven micropollutants were classified in the fast group with $t_{1/2}$ between 0.05 h and 0.79 h, 24 in the medium group with $t_{1/2}$ between 5.3 h and 49.7 h, and five in the slow group with $t_{1/2}$ between 56 h and 118 h. The $t_{1/2}$ values obtained in laboratory were compared with those from a CW receiving treated wastewater. Correction factors were calculated to adjust the in situ data for the light intensity in laboratory and improved the correspondence especially for the micropollutants of the fast and medium groups. Finally, an innovative method based on statistical tests highlighted the chemical functions characteristic of micropollutants sensitive to photodegradation (OH-C=O, C=N-O-, =N-OH, -CH=N, -O-P=O, -C=C-) and with low sensitivity (-O-R, -Cl).

Keywords: direct photodegradation, light intensity, chemical functions, organic micropollutant, free-water surface constructed wetland

1. Introduction

Over the past 20 years, many studies have demonstrated the presence of micropollutants in wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs). Many micropollutants persist in treated wastewater, such as pesticides, pharmaceuticals, hormones, etc. (Miège et al., 2009; Verlicchi et al., 2012; Luo et al., 2014; Tran et al., 2018). These micropollutants are quantified at concentrations of the order of ng.L^{-1} for hormones (e.g. estrone) to $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ for pharmaceuticals (e.g. diclofenac, ibuprofen, atenolol, carbamazepine) and pesticides (e.g. diuron, diazinon) (Miège et al., 2009; Verlicchi et al., 2012; Luo et al., 2014; Ben et al., 2018). Treated wastewaters are discharged into the natural environment, and many pharmaceuticals and pesticides have been quantified in rivers (Luo et al., 2014; Gonzalez-Rey et al., 2015). These micropollutants can prove toxic at environmental concentration levels and produce a wide range of responses in non-target organisms (Fent et al., 2006; Brodin et al., 2013; Pal et al., 2006).

Current European legislation, and specifically the Water Framework Directive (WFD, 2000/60/EC, European Commission, 2000), does not impose a discharge limit on the concentrations of micropollutants in liquid effluents from WWTPs. However, the WFD and French regulations specify that the release of priority substances of the Watch List must be reduced or even stopped (Decision 2015/495/EC, European Commission, 2015). To meet these reduction objectives, many studies have sought to identify effective processes for eliminating micropollutants in wastewater treatment plants (Grandclément et al., 2017; Reyes Contreras et al., 2019; Silva et al., 2019). Recent literature further reports that pharmaceuticals and pesticides can also be eliminated by natural photodegradation (Burrows et al., 2002; Fatta-Kassinos et al., 2011; Challis et al., 2014), specifically as polishing treatment complementary to secondary treatment in the context of a free-water surface constructed wetland (CW) (Mathon et al., 2019). The photodegradation mechanisms take two different pathways. The first, direct photolysis, occurs by absorption of UV rays by the micropollutant. The second, indirect photolysis, is possible in the presence of photosensitizers (nitrates, nitrites, dissolved organic matters (DOM), etc.), which promote the generation of reactive species ($^1\text{O}_2$, OH^\bullet and $\text{CO}_3^{\bullet-}$ radicals and the excited triplet state $^3\text{DOM}^*$), leading to the degradation of the micropollutant (Zepp, 1987).

A photochemical reaction occurs when a micropollutant first absorbs a photon leading to an electronically excited state. Then during the deactivation processes, photochemical reactions can take place from the lowest excited states whose lifetimes is sufficiently long (Braun et al., 1986).

To date, most micropollutant photodegradation studies have been carried out under controlled laboratory conditions with light exposure that differs from solar radiation (monochromatic light, too-high intensity, etc.), which is not satisfying as such conditions are too far from real conditions (Mathon et al., 2016). To be as close as possible to natural photodegradation experiments in the aquatic environment, Challis et al. (2014) proposed specific recommendations such as the use of light source

74 more close to sunlight intensity and wavelength range, a pH close to 7 and the absence of organic solvent
75 in the spiked solutions.

76 The rate of a micropollutant photodegradation is generally characterized by a kinetic constant (k) or a
77 half-life ($t_{1/2}$). The mechanisms of direct photodegradation are influenced by the environmental
78 conditions and the nature of the micropollutant. However, the conditions of exposure, in particular the
79 light intensity, the exposure time and the geometry of the photoreactors, are usually poorly documented
80 in the literature, when they are, they usually differ from one author to another. As a result, the $t_{1/2}$ values
81 determined for each micropollutant vary widely and are difficult to compare (Challis et al., 2014).

82 To enable a more rigorous comparison, Mathon et al. (2019) assessed *in situ* the photodegradability
83 under solar radiation of 23 micropollutants in the context of a CW (Marguerittes, France). This study
84 demonstrated that direct photodegradation was the predominant elimination pathway in that context.

85 In a same way it is difficult to relate the nature (chemical structure and intrinsic properties) of a
86 micropollutant to its photodegradability based on data from the literature. Many publications concern
87 the study of QSARs (quantitative structure-activity relationships), for predicting the behavior of organic
88 micropollutants such as dissolution, volatilization, biodegradation, and adsorption with molecular
89 intrinsic descriptors that need to be previously modeled and calculated (Mamy et al., 2015). Currently,
90 such QSARs mainly use energy transitions (E_{LUMO} , E_{HOMO}) to predict photodegradation. In addition to
91 such models, it would be interesting to test the influence of other descriptors, more easily available, such
92 as physico-chemical properties or chemical structure characteristics (i.e., molecular weight, quantum
93 yield, $\log K_{ow}$, pKa, water solubility, functional groups and covalent bonds) to improve the prediction
94 of micropollutant photodegradability .

95 Here, we present a controlled laboratory experiment of the direct photodegradation of 36 micropollutants
96 with a wide range physico-chemical properties (molecular weight, quantum yield, $\log K_{ow}$, etc.). The
97 objective of this study was to evaluate the half-lives ($t_{1/2}$) and the kinetic constants of direct
98 micropollutants photodegradation (k) under controlled conditions of light exposure close to those of
99 solar radiation. The $t_{1/2}$ values for direct photodegradation measured under controlled conditions were
100 compared with the $t_{1/2}$ values measured under real conditions (also focused on direct photodegradation)
101 for the same micropollutants studied *in situ* in Mathon et al. (2019). This comparison also aimed to
102 determine the best method for comparing results obtained under different conditions. Finally, statistical
103 tests enabled to explore the relationships between the $t_{1/2}$ and the physico-chemical properties and
104 structures of the micropollutants for predicting their direct photodegradation.

105 **2. Materials and methods**

106 **2.1. Selection of micropollutants**

107

108 A list of 36 micropollutants was drawn up (Table 1) for their well-known toxic effects on aquatic
109 organisms and human health, their high occurrence in secondary treated wastewaters (Miège et al.,
110 2009), and because they represented a wide range of physico-chemical properties, including
111 photodegradation potential (i.e. molecular weight, quantum yield, log K_{ow} , water solubility, pKa).

112 Table 1. The 36 micropollutants selected, their main physico-chemical characteristics and the limits of quantification in water.

Micropollutant	Abbreviation	Molecular weight (g.mol ⁻¹)	Chemical formula	Family	Quantum yield Φ	Log K_{ow}	Solubility in water (25°C) (mg/L)	pK _a	Limit of quantification (ng.L ⁻¹)
Acebutolol	ACE	336.43	C18H28N2O4	Beta blockers	6.0.10 ⁻⁷	1.71	259	9.4	0.2
Acetylsulfamethoxazole	ASUL	295.07	C12H13N3O4S	Metabolites	P.I.	1.21	1216	P.I.	0.2
Fenofibric acid	AFENO	318.75	C17H15ClO4	Metabolites	2.0.10 ⁻⁴	4	9	P.I.	1
Alprazolam	ALP	308.77	C17H13ClN4	Anti-inflammatories	3.4.10 ⁻⁶	2.12	40	P.I.	0.2
Amitriptyline	AMI	277.40	C20H23N	Anti-inflammatories	3.0.10 ⁻³	4.92	10	9.4	1
Atenolol	ATE	266.34	C14H22N2O3	Beta blockers	3.6.10 ⁻²	0.16	1.33.10 ⁴	9.6	0.2
Atrazine	ATZ	215.68	C8H14ClN5	Pesticides	1.0.10 ⁻⁴	2.61	35	P.I.	0.1
Azithromycin	AZI	748.98	C38H72N2O12	Antibiotics	P.I.	2.44	<1000	9.57	5
Carbamazepine	CBZ	236.27	C15H12N2O	Anti-depressants	3.1.10 ⁻⁴	2.45	18	P.I.	0.2
Clarithromycin	CLA	747.95	C38H69NO13	Antibiotics	5.0.10 ⁻⁴	3.16	0.33	8.99	1
Clindamycin	CLIN	424.98	C18H33ClN2O5S	Antibiotics	3.0.10 ⁻⁴	2.16	31	P.I.	0.4
Cyclophosphamide	CYC	261.09	C7H15Cl2N2O2P	Anticancer	4.0.10 ⁻⁴	0.63	1-5.10 ⁴	P.I.	0.2
Diazepam	DIAZ	284.74	C16H13ClN2O	Anti-depressants	4.3.10 ⁻⁶	2.82	50	3.4	0.2
Diclofenac	DICLO	296.15	C14H11Cl2NO2	Anti-inflammatories	1.3.10 ⁻³	4.51	2	4.15	0.4
Dimethoate	DIM	229.26	C5H12NO3PS2	Pesticides	5.0.10 ⁻⁵	0.78	2.5.10 ⁴	P.I.	0.2
Diuron	DIU	233.09	C9H10Cl2N2O	Pesticides	1.7.10 ⁻⁴	2.68	49	13.55	0.1
Erythromycin	ERY	733.93	C37H67NO13	Antibiotics	4.0.10 ⁻⁴	3.06	2000	8.88	1
Fluoxetine	FLUOX	309.33	C17H18F3NO	Anti-depressants	P.I.	4.5	5.10 ⁴	P.I.	4
Imidacloprid	IMI	255.66	C9H10ClN5O2	Pesticides	8.6.10 ⁻⁴	0.57	610	P.I.	0.4
Isoproturon	ISO	206.28	C12H18N2O	Pesticides	2.0.10 ⁻³	2.87	70	P.I.	0.1
Ketoprofen	KETO	254.28	C16H14O3	Anti-inflammatories	1.0.10 ⁻³	3.12	51	4.45	0.2
Metoprolol	MET	267.36	C15H25NO3	Beta blockers	2.0.10 ⁻²	1.88	1.69.10 ⁴	P.I.	0.1
Metronidazole	METRO	171.15	C6H9N3O3	Antibiotics	4.2.10 ⁻⁵	-0.02	9500	2.38	0.4
Nordiazepam	NORD	270.71	C15H11ClN2O	Anti-depressants	1.7.10 ⁻⁶	2.93	9	P.I.	0.1
Norfluoxetine	NORF	295.3	C16H16F3NO	Metabolites	P.I.	3.8	9.15	P.I.	1
Ofloxacin	OFLO	361.37	C18H20FN3O4	Antibiotics	3.0.10 ⁻³	-0.39	2.8.10 ⁴	P.I.	2
Oxazepam	OXA	286.71	C15H11ClN2O2	Anti-depressants	8.8.10 ⁻⁶	2.24	179	P.I.	0.2
Paracetamol	PARA	151.16	C8H9NO2	Anti-inflammatories	4.6.10 ⁻²	0.46	1.4. 10 ⁴	9.38	1
Pirimicarb	PIRI	238.29	C11H18N4O2	Pesticides	P.I.	1.4	970	P.I.	0.2
Propranolol	PROP	259.34	C16H21NO2	Beta blockers	2.2.10 ⁻⁵	3.48	62	9.42	0.1
Salbutamol	SAL	239.31	C13H21NO3	Bronchodilators	6.0.10 ⁻²	0.64	1.4. 10 ⁴	10.3	0.4
Simazine	SIM	201.66	C7H12ClN5	Pesticides	6.2.10 ⁻²	2.18	6	1.62	0.1
Sotalol	SOT	272.36	C12H20N2O3S	Beta blockers	5.0.10 ⁻³	0.24	5510	P.I.	0.4
Sulfamethoxazole	SULFA	253.28	C10H11N3O3S	Antibiotics	3.0.10 ⁻⁴	0.89	610	P.I.	0.2
Theophylline	THEO	180.16	C7H8N4O2	Anti-inflammatories	8.0.10 ⁻⁶	-0.02	7360	8.81	1
Trimethoprim	TRIM	290.32	C14H18N4O3	Antibiotics	3.0.10 ⁻⁵	0.91	400	6.6	0.2

114 **2.2. Direct photodegradation experiments**

115 For a better match with *in situ* photodegradation studies, we opted to work with a lamp simulating the
116 solar radiation. We therefore selected an Atlas® suntest as the source of radiation which consists of a
117 test chamber with a surface area of 560 cm² irradiated by a xenon arc lamp (power 500 watts), with a
118 constant light dose of 765 Wm⁻² in a wavelength range of 300–800 nm. In addition, the device comprised
119 a cooling plate equipped with a circulation cryostat limiting as much as possible the rise in temperature
120 in the test chamber. Agitation was provided by a magnetic stirrer placed under the cooling plate.

121 The reactor consisted of 500 mL of MilliQ LC-Pak ultrapure water in a quartz flask. A spiked solution
122 containing the 36 micropollutants studied was added to the quartz flasks to obtain a concentration of
123 10 µg.L⁻¹ each. In parallel, 5 mL of the spiked solution, not exposed to light during the experiment,
124 served as a control to ensure the absence of degradation via other processes (e.g. hydrolysis). In each of
125 the solutions (control + reactor), a mixture of 22 perdeuterated internal surrogates at concentrations of
126 20 µg.L⁻¹ was added as a quality control.

127 The reactor solution was placed in the suntest chamber, which was positioned in a dark room for the
128 duration of the experiment. We collected 25 mL samples after 0, 0.5, 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 24, 36, 53, 77, 149
129 and 173 hours of exposure in the suntest.

130 The pH and the temperature of the reactor were checked at each sampling time. The pH checks ensured
131 compliance with the conditions encountered in a natural environment (water pH ≈ 7). Temperature
132 monitoring showed a relatively high temperature (close to 40°C). To ensure that the full decrease in the
133 concentration of micropollutants was due solely to their photodegradation, we also assessed their
134 degradation by hydrolysis and thermolysis, as well as losses by adsorption. To this end, we carried out
135 the same experiments but in the dark, and for the evaluation of thermolysis, in an oven at 40°C.

136 **2.3. Micropollutants analysis**

137 We performed direct injections of water samples in the chromatographic system. The analysis of the
138 micropollutants was performed by ultra-high performance liquid chromatography (UHPLC Nexera 2,
139 Shimadzu) coupled with tandem mass spectrometry (AB Sciex API 4000) (LC-MS/MS). The separation
140 was performed on an ACQUITY UPLC HSS-T3 column (C18, 100 × 2.1 mm × 1.7 µm), preceded by a
141 pre-column of the same phase (5 × 2.1 mm × 1.7 µm). The MS/MS acquisition on a triple quadrupole
142 was performed in positive ionization. The compounds were quantified by internal calibration from a
143 quadratic type calibration line containing the compounds and their associated deuterated derivatives.

144 This validated analytical technique gave robust micropollutant concentrations, with low limits of
145 quantification (LoQ = 0.1–5 ng.L⁻¹) (Table 1). A UHPLC chromatogram of the standard solution
146 including the 36 studied micropollutants in the mobile phase is available in SPM5.

147 **2.4. Data analysis**

148 **2.4.1. Determination of the kinetic constant k and half-life $t_{1/2}$**

149 Several studies have shown that photochemical reactions contribute to the breakdown of pesticides and
150 pharmaceuticals in water exposed to solar radiation (Burrows et al., 2002; Fatta-Kassinos et al., 2011).
151 These reactions take place through photolysis, in which a chemical compound is broken down with the
152 energy of light rays. The rate of disappearance is generally expressed using kinetics of order 1
153 (Equation 1), with the half-life defined by Equation 2, as follows:

$$-\frac{d[\text{MP}]}{dt} = k \cdot [\text{MP}] \quad (\text{Eq. 1}) \qquad t_{1/2} = \frac{\text{Ln } 2}{k} \quad (\text{Eq. 2})$$

154 where [MP] is the concentration for a micropollutant, k is the kinetic constant of direct photolysis, and
155 $t_{1/2}$ is the half-life of the micropollutant.

156 To determine this kinetic constant k , the graph $\text{Ln} ([\text{MP}](t)/[\text{MP}_0]) = f(t)$ is drawn. The direct coefficient
157 of the linear regression of the data points is the constant k (Figure 2). As we will see, the studied
158 micropollutants photodegraded with different kinetics. Some micropollutants were partially
159 photodegraded (atrazine, atenolol and diazepam) after 173 h of exposure, while others completely
160 degraded after only 30 min of exposure (PROP, KETO and AFENO). Thus, the number of data points
161 used to draw the linear regression ranged widely according to the micropollutant (Table 3). For some
162 micropollutants, the LoQ was reached well before 30 minutes. So, the constant k was determined with
163 only two concentrations, the initial and the final concentration (LoQ); it is a minimum approximate value
164 for these special cases.

165 **2.4.2. Comparison of $t_{1/2}$ obtained in laboratory and in situ: correction of differences in light** 166 **intensity**

167 In order to compare the results obtained in laboratory in the present study with those obtained in CW
168 (Mathon et al. 2019), or with results from the literature. (review by Mathon et al. 2016), we compared
169 the light emission spectrum of the lamp used in the laboratory with different solar light spectra measured
170 at noon in summer when the intensity is close to maximum (SPM 4). We considered an average daily
171 light duration of 11 h in summer and 9 h in winter. The light intensity of our experiment was on average
172 1.4 times greater than the intensity measured in Miami, USA and 3.1 times greater than that measured
173 in the CW of Marguerittes (Mathon et al. 2019).

174 We developed a method to compare the $t_{1/2}$ obtained in laboratory with values obtained previously with
175 direct photodegradation in the CW of Marguerittes (Hérault, France), according to Mathon et al. (2019).
176 These *in situ* experiments were carried out in flasks immersed at different water depths, containing pure
177 water spiked with micropollutants (also at $10 \mu\text{g}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$). We report in Table 3 the $t_{1/2}$ obtained at depth 10
178 cm. To compare the $t_{1/2}$ measured in laboratory with that measured *in situ*, we normalized the light

179 intensity measured *in situ* to that controlled in laboratory, by evaluating correction factors, for each hour
180 of exposure in the field. These factors took into account (i) the light intensity (300–400 nm) of the
181 suntest lamp (84 W.m⁻²) used in the laboratory, which is the reference intensity, and (ii) the light intensity
182 at depth 10 cm in the CW, evaluated by several measurements with a spectroradiometer (obtaining a
183 light intensity by wavelength on the UV range from 290–550 nm) and corrected by continuous
184 measurement with a pyranometer (obtaining a less precise average light intensity over the range 300–
185 1100 nm). This method allows to integrate reduction in light intensity linked to climatic conditions
186 (clouds, fog, etc.) and to the physico-chemical parameters of the water (suspended matter, natural
187 organic matter, etc.). For example, we recorded 14 W.m⁻² (290–550 nm) with the spectroradiometer
188 during the summer campaign, the first day at noon; at the same time, we recorded 831 W.m⁻² (300–1100
189 nm) with the pyranometer. The temporal variation of the light intensity was then evaluated with the
190 pyranometer continuously (every 2 minutes) throughout the *in situ* experiment, to extrapolate a temporal
191 variation with the spectroradiometer. Finally, for *in situ* measurements, we obtained a light intensity
192 over the UV range from 290 nm to 550 nm, and hour by hour. For each period of 1 hour of exposure in
193 the field, we could recalculate how much this represented in equivalent hours of exposure to the suntest
194 lamp (laboratory condition).

195 **2.4.3. Statistical analyses to study the relationships between physico-chemical properties** 196 **of micropollutants and their photodegradability**

197 The R software was used for the statistical analyses carried out in this study. To classify micropollutants
198 into different classes according to their functional groups and covalent bonds, the Ascending
199 Hierarchical Classification (AHC) according to the Ward criterion was implemented. Ward's method
200 consists of making classes of micropollutants, so that the increase in the inter-class inertia is maximum
201 (Legendre & Legendre, 2012). The distances between the micropollutants are calculated from their
202 respective numbers of functional groups based on the Bray-Curtis dissimilarity (Legendre & Legendre,
203 2012). A Correspondence Analysis (CoA) (Braak, 1986; Jongman et al., 1995) was then carried out on
204 the same data to project the micropollutants classified into classes and their constitutive functional
205 groups in the same space with reduced dimensions. The CoA grouped certain micropollutants and
206 highlighted their characteristic functional groups. The distribution of the values of the CoA formed a
207 three-dimensional space carrying a significant proportion of the total variability of the data.

208 Before using the data from $t_{1/2}$ in laboratory or *in situ*, we had to make sure their respective distributions
209 were Normal. The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to assess the correspondence of the distribution of $t_{1/2}$
210 (less than 50 observed values) with that of the Normal distribution (Shapiro and Wilk, 1965). However,
211 it turned out that the distributions of $t_{1/2}$ were closer to the normal distribution once they had been
212 transformed into decimal logarithms (p -values increased from $5.3 \cdot 10^{-5}$ to $1.3 \cdot 10^{-4}$ for $t_{1/2}$ in laboratory
213 and from $4.5 \cdot 10^{-7}$ to $7,1 \cdot 10^{-3}$ for $t_{1/2}$ *in situ*).

214 The laboratory and *in situ* $t_{1/2}$ values of the micropollutants composing each of the classes established
215 by the two previous analyses were studied to conclude on significant differences in $t_{1/2}$ between these
216 classes. For this purpose, Kruskal-Wallis tests were carried out to validate a typological effect on $t_{1/2}$;
217 these tests were then supplemented by a Dunn test to identify the differences in $t_{1/2}$ by pairs of classes
218 (Dinno, 2016).

219 We then considered all chemical functions as well as $\log K_{ow}$, molecular weight and quantum yield (Φ),
220 parameters that could explain the variables for $t_{1/2}$. To identify those most significantly correlated with
221 laboratory and *in situ* $t_{1/2}$, we used the multiple linear regression model:

$$222 \quad y_i = \beta_0 + \sum_{j=1}^k \beta_j x_{ij} + e_i \quad (\text{Eq. 3})$$

223 where k is the number of explanatory variables and i one of the individuals in the observed population,
224 β_0 is a constant, β_1 to β_k represents the coefficients associated respectively with the k explanatory
225 variables x_1 to x_k , y_i the variable to be predicted and e_i represents the Gaussian error associated with the
226 model.

227 Finally, we applied the stepwise regression method (Venables and Ripley, 2002) to select the most
228 influential variables for $t_{1/2}$, among 19 variables: molecular weight, $\log \Phi$, $\log K_{ow}$ and 16 functional
229 groups weighted with its dissociation energy (see Table 2). A functional group with a high dissociation
230 energy requires a greater supply of energy (here provided by absorbed UV radiation) to be broken, and
231 so will be less sensitive to photodegradation. The stepwise method is based on Akaike's Information
232 Criterion (AIC), which measures the trade-off between the raise of goodness-of-fit with the model
233 complexity.

234

235 *Table 2. Chemical functions sensitive and refractory to photodegradation (Hammami, 2008) and*
 236 *dissociation energy of their covalent bonds (Blanksby & Ellison, 2003) considered in our multiple linear*
 237 *regression models.*

Sensitive functional groups	Dissociation energy (kcal.mol⁻¹)	Refractory functional groups	Dissociation energy (kcal.mol⁻¹)
Carbonyl (-C=O)	178.1	Primary amine (-NH ₂)	85.2
Alkene (-C=C-)	146.7	Secondary amine (-NH-CH ₃)	87.0
Nitro (=NO-OH)	70.1	Tertiary amine (-N-(CH ₃) ₂)	90.0
Imine (-CH=N-)	147.0	Hydroxyl (-OH)	92.1
Phenyl (-C ₆ H ₅)	104.0	Ether oxide (-O-)	0.5
Sulfone (O=S=O)	275.0	Chloride (-Cl)	81.0
Phosphinate (-O-P=O)	130.0	Fluoride (-F)	108.3
Oxime (-C=N-O-)	48.0		
Carboxylic acid (OH-C=O)	160.0		

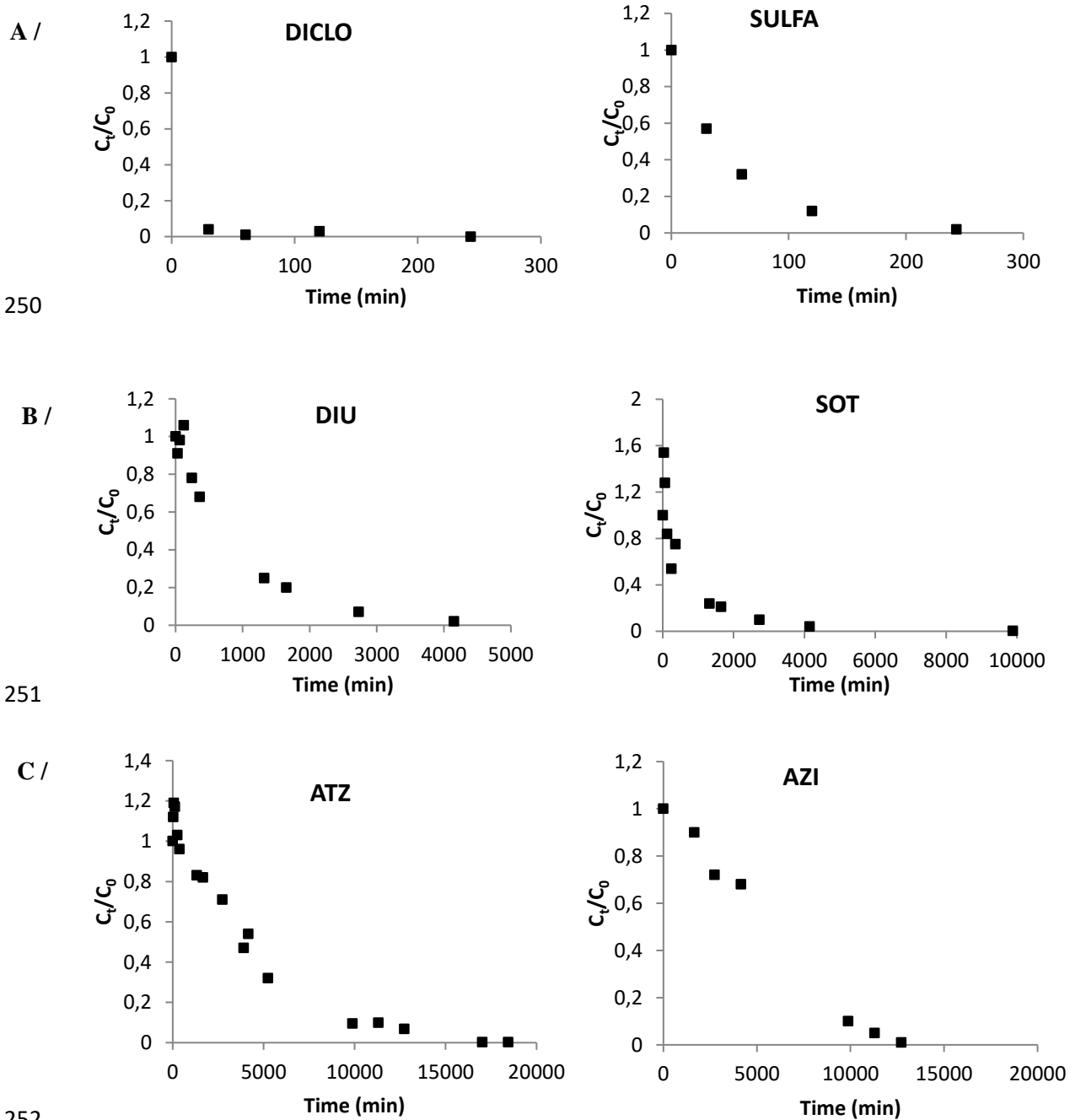
238 **3. Results and discussion**

239 **3.1. Kinetic constants of direct photodegradation and classification**

240 From the preliminary experiments (see part 2.2), we checked that the degradation by hydrolysis,
 241 thermolysis and the losses by adsorption were negligible (<10%).

242 Considering a first order kinetics photodegradation, we observed three main micropollutant behaviors,
 243 (Figure 1, Table 3). A first group, composed of seven micropollutants, and illustrated with DICLO and
 244 SULFA, were fast degraded, with a 90% decrease in the initial concentration in less than 200 minutes
 245 (or 3.3 h). The second group, composed of 24 micropollutants, represented by diuron and sotalol, was
 246 medium degraded, with a 90% decrease in the initial concentration by around 4000 minutes (or 67 h).
 247 Finally, at third group, composed of five micropollutants, represented by atrazine and azithromycin, was
 248 slow degraded, with a 90% decrease in the initial concentration of less than 10,000 minutes (or 167 h).

249



253 *Figure 1. Evolution over time of the concentration of six micropollutants (DICLO, SULFA, DIU, SOT,*
 254 *ATZ and AZI) subjected to exposure in a suntest (lamp power 765 W.m^{-2} with wavelength $> 300 \text{ nm}$;*
 255 *$[MP]_0 = 10 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$) in a reactor containing pure water. A / fast photodegradation, B / medium*
 256 *photodegradation and C / slow photodegradation*

257 From these kinetic curves, we determined the kinetic constants k and $t_{1/2}$ of each micropollutant, as
 258 explained in part 2.3.1. These results are reported in Table 3.

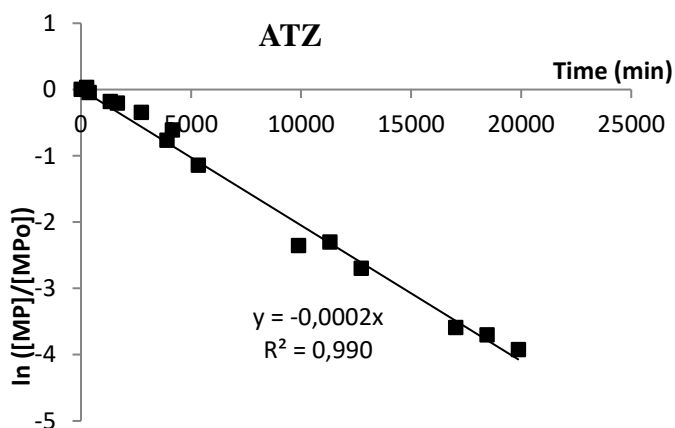
259 3.2. Comparison of $t_{1/2}$ evaluated in laboratory with $t_{1/2}$ in the literature

260 In a recent review on photodegradability of 13 pharmaceuticals and pesticides, $t_{1/2}$ from the literature
 261 were collected and reported and we proposed a classification based on the direct photodegradation

262 (Mathon et al., 2016). This classification was as follows: a first group, consisting of fast photodegradable
 263 micropollutants, with $t_{1/2}$ lower than 8 h, a second group of medium photodegradable micropollutants
 264 with $t_{1/2}$ between 8 h and 168 h, and finally a third group of slow photodegradable micropollutants with
 265 $t_{1/2}$ greater than 168 h. These groups were defined based on a one-day sun exposure in France. However,
 266 according to part 2.4.2, the laboratory suntest irradiation power was on average 3.3 times higher than
 267 one-day real sun exposure. To be consistent with the literature, we therefore recalculated the $t_{1/2}$
 268 thresholds measured under laboratory suntest exposure (by dividing them by 3.3): the fast
 269 photodegraded micropollutants now have $t_{1/2} < 3.1$ h, those medium photodegraded have $t_{1/2}$ between
 270 3.1 h and 65 h, and those slow photodegraded have $t_{1/2}$ greater than 65 h. These results are presented in
 271 Table 3.

272 In this way, the seven micropollutants classified in the fast group have $t_{1/2}$ between 0.05 h for AFENO
 273 and 0.79 h for IMI, the 24 micropollutants in the medium group have $t_{1/2}$ between 5.3 h for TRI and 49.7
 274 h for SMZ, and the five micropollutants classified in the slow group have $t_{1/2}$ between 56 h for ATZ and
 275 118 h for AZI.

276 The curves $\ln([MP]/[MP]_0) = f(t)$ (Figure 2) do not have the same number of points, with fewer points
 277 for micropollutants fast photodegraded (because their concentrations reach <LoQ more quickly). All
 278 graphs are available in SPM 1. We consider that a kinetic constants k is reliable if it was determined
 279 from at least 5 data points (Table 3, 26 values, in white). Otherwise, the k value constitutes a first
 280 estimate with higher uncertainty (Table 3, 10 values, in grey).



281

282 *Figure 2. Example of the determination of the photodegradation kinetic constant k for ATZ*

283 Among the 11 micropollutants studied both in laboratory and in the review from Mathon et al. (2016),
 284 we finally obtained, as showed in Table 3, the same classification for three micropollutants (DICLO,
 285 PROP, ATE), which are well documented in the literature ($n > 30$). By contrast, for seven
 286 micropollutants (SMZ, ISO, SOT, DIAZ, DIU, CBZ and MET), we observe some differences. For the
 287 first five, there are few data in the literature ($n < 8$), and the classification as proposed in Mathon et al.

288 (2016) was therefore not very robust. For the last two micropollutants, there are much more data in the
289 literature ($n > 14$), but they are dispersed ($t_{1/2}$ between 17 and 12,600 hours for CBZ), which challenges
290 the comparability of $t_{1/2}$ from several different publications. Finally, we note that no $t_{1/2}$ value had been
291 published for ERY before the present laboratory study.

292 3.3. Comparison of $t_{1/2}$ evaluated in laboratory and $t_{1/2}$ evaluated in situ in a previous study

293 In Table 3, are listed the $t_{1/2}$ values obtained in laboratory in the present study, the $t_{1/2}$ obtained *in situ*
294 (Mathon et al. 2019), and the $t_{1/2}$ normalized with respect to the light conditions in the laboratory (suntest
295 lamp at 84 W.m^{-2}), as explained in part 2.4.2. The ratios $t_{1/2}(\textit{in situ}) / t_{1/2}(\textit{laboratory})$ highlight significant
296 differences between micropollutants and depending on the conditions of exposure. We observed $t_{1/2}$ *in*
297 *situ* in summer on average 8.2 times greater than $t_{1/2}$ in laboratory (with ratios ranging from 0.9 for OFLO
298 to 50 for AFENO). The differences observed are even greater if we consider the winter campaigns with
299 $t_{1/2}$ *in situ* on average 14.2 times greater than $t_{1/2}$ in laboratory (with ratios ranging from 0.4 for ATE to
300 47 for SULFA).

301 The differences in $t_{1/2}$ for the same micropollutant can be explained by differences in light intensity
302 between winter and summer, and *in situ* and in laboratory. We then applied correction factors (cf. part
303 2.4.2.) proportional to the light intensity applied, to allow the comparison of $t_{1/2}$ values obtained in
304 laboratory or *in situ*.

305 The $t_{1/2}$ values *in situ* with or without correction are compared with the $t_{1/2}$ values obtained in laboratory
306 for 30 micropollutants in common (Table 3). In summer, $t_{1/2}(\textit{in situ corrected})$ were on average 1.4 times
307 lower than $t_{1/2}(\textit{laboratory})$ (with ratios $t_{1/2}(\textit{in situ corrected}) / t_{1/2}(\textit{laboratory})$ ranging from 0.11 for
308 OFLO to 2.3 for AFENO). In winter, $t_{1/2}(\textit{in situ})$ were on average 2.3 times lower than $t_{1/2}(\textit{laboratory})$
309 (with ratios from 0.01 for AFENO to 2 for METRO). This, the use of correction factors based on light
310 intensity clearly improved the correspondence between laboratory and *in situ* data, especially for the
311 micropollutants of the "fast" and "medium" groups.

312 For the "slow" group, the use of correction factor did not improve the comparability of laboratory and
313 *in situ* data. The difference between averaged light intensity measurement of the present laboratory study
314 and the real light intensity on a CW that fluctuates with time becomes too high. This bias is even higher
315 in winter with a greater variation in light intensity during the day due to weather conditions (clouds, fog,
316 etc.). In addition, the physico-chemical characteristics of real waters of a CW increase the absorption of
317 light intensity and thus the possible bias. It would be interesting to further study the impact of suspended
318 particulate matter, dissolved organic carbon, and chlorophyll A concentrations, and to consider them for
319 the correction factors calculation.

320 Table 3. The kinetic constants k and $t_{1/2}$ by direct photodegradation of 36 micropollutants determined during the laboratory experiment and in situ for the
 321 summer and winter campaigns (CW) and $t_{1/2}$ in the literature described in Mathon et al., 2016 ($t_{1/2}$ mean [Min - Max] (number of data)). The number of data
 322 points to calculate the kinetic constant k is given, values in grey when number of quantified data < 5. The corrected $t_{1/2}$ values calculated using the approach
 323 detailed in part 2.4.2. The micropollutants are classified according to their increasing $t_{1/2}$ in laboratory (fast group blue, medium green and slow red). N.I.A.
 324 = no information available.

Micropollutant	k (h ⁻¹)		$t_{1/2}$ (h)					
	Laboratory	Number of quantified data to determine k	Laboratory	Summer		Winter		In the review from Mathon et al. (2016)
				In situ	In situ corrected	In situ	In situ corrected	
AFENO	13.863	2	0.1	2.5	0.23	0.7	0.08	N.I.A.
KETO	6.931	2	0.1	1.4	0.06	0.7	0.04	N.I.A.
METRO	2.567	4	0.3	2.8	0.18	4.8	0.08	N.I.A.
DICLO	1.873	5	0.4	3.3	0.28	4.3	0.09	4.9 [0.005 - 47] (n = 33)
PIRI	1.238	5	0.6	4.2	0.39	14.4	0.37	N.I.A.
SULFA	1.019	5	0.7	15.6	1.4	31.7	0.77	N.I.A.
IMI	0.877	6	0.8	6.1	0.51	19.1	0.53	N.I.A.
TRI	0.131	6	5.3	84.5	9.3	135.9	4.5	N.I.A.
PARA	0.112	4	5.8	119.5	12.8	130.8	4.3	N.I.A.
PROP	0.102	2	6.8	25.1	3.1	90.0	1.6	66 [0.3 - 408] (n = 48)
CBZ	0.066	10	10.5	95	10.6	115.5	3.3	2625 [17 - 12600] (n = 35)
ERY	0.066	9	10.5	37.7	4.2	19.7	0.56	No data in literature
OXA	0.061	11	N.I.A.	N.I.A.	N.I.A.	N.I.A.	N.I.A.	N.I.A.
DIU	0.058	10	11.9	119.5	13.4	495.1	16.7	521 [4 - 3192] (n = 8)
CLA	0.050	10	14.0	73.7	8.4	105.0	2.8	N.I.A.
ISO	0.043	12	16.0	105	11.4	277.3	9.7	2.5 [1.4 - 5] (n = 4)
ACE	0.040	7	17.2	73.7	8.1	123.8	5.0	N.I.A.
SOT	0.036	11	19.1	85.6	9.4	30.0	1.5	6 (n = 1)
CLIN	0.034	10	20.6	88.9	17.7	182.4	4.0	N.I.A.
OFLO	0.033	5	20.9	19.8	2.3	N.I.A.	N.I.A.	N.I.A.
MET	0.032	4	22.0	84.5	9.4	245.7	4.6	3572 [29 - 11632] (n = 14)
DIM	0.030	9	23.3	95	12.7	990.2	45.7	N.I.A.
AMI	0.029	3	23.7	N.I.A.	N.I.A.	N.I.A.	N.I.A.	N.I.A.
SAL	0.028	10	24.5	108.3	11.9	N.I.A.	N.I.A.	N.I.A.
ASUL	0.023	10	30.6	N.I.A.	N.I.A.	133.3	3.8	N.I.A.
THEO	0.023	11	30.6	126	14.0	154.0	6.5	N.I.A.
ALP	0.020	12	34.2	N.I.A.	N.I.A.	N.I.A.	N.I.A.	N.I.A.
FLUOX	0.015	4	43.4	N.I.A.	N.I.A.	N.I.A.	N.I.A.	N.I.A.
CYC	0.016	7	43.9	83.5	9.8	111.8	2.9	N.I.A.
NORD	0.015	10	46.4	N.I.A.	N.I.A.	N.I.A.	N.I.A.	N.I.A.
SMZ	0.014	18	49.7	130.8	16.2	117.5	2.7	0.08 [0.03 - 0.13] (n = 3)
ATZ	0.013	17	56.4	150.7	17.4	288.8	5.5	N.I.A.
ATE	0.012	4	58.6	92.4	10.4	22.1	0.77	1248 [0.1 - 3984] (n = 13)
DIAZ	0.009	10	77.0	115.5	12.5	433.2	9.0	28 [3 - 103] (n = 5)
NORF	0.007	4	94.7	N.I.A.	N.I.A.	N.I.A.	N.I.A.	N.I.A.
AZI	0.006	5	118.0	223.6	24.9	N.I.A.	N.I.A.	N.I.A.

325

326 **3.4. Relationships between the physico-chemical characteristics and structure of the**
327 **micropollutants and their photodegradability**

328 ***3.4.1. Understand the direct photodegradation classification with electronic transition***

329 The micropollutants of the three groups were compared to highlight the influence of functional groups
330 and their possible electronic transitions. The two main electronic transitions in photochemistry are the
331 transitions $n \rightarrow \pi^*$ occurring in the photochemistry of the carbonyl group, and the transition $\pi \rightarrow \pi^*$
332 occurring during the excitation of the double bonds. These electronic transitions lead to an excited state
333 whose lifetime is longer for the $n \rightarrow \pi^*$ transition than for the $\pi \rightarrow \pi^*$ transition (Mousseron, 1969).

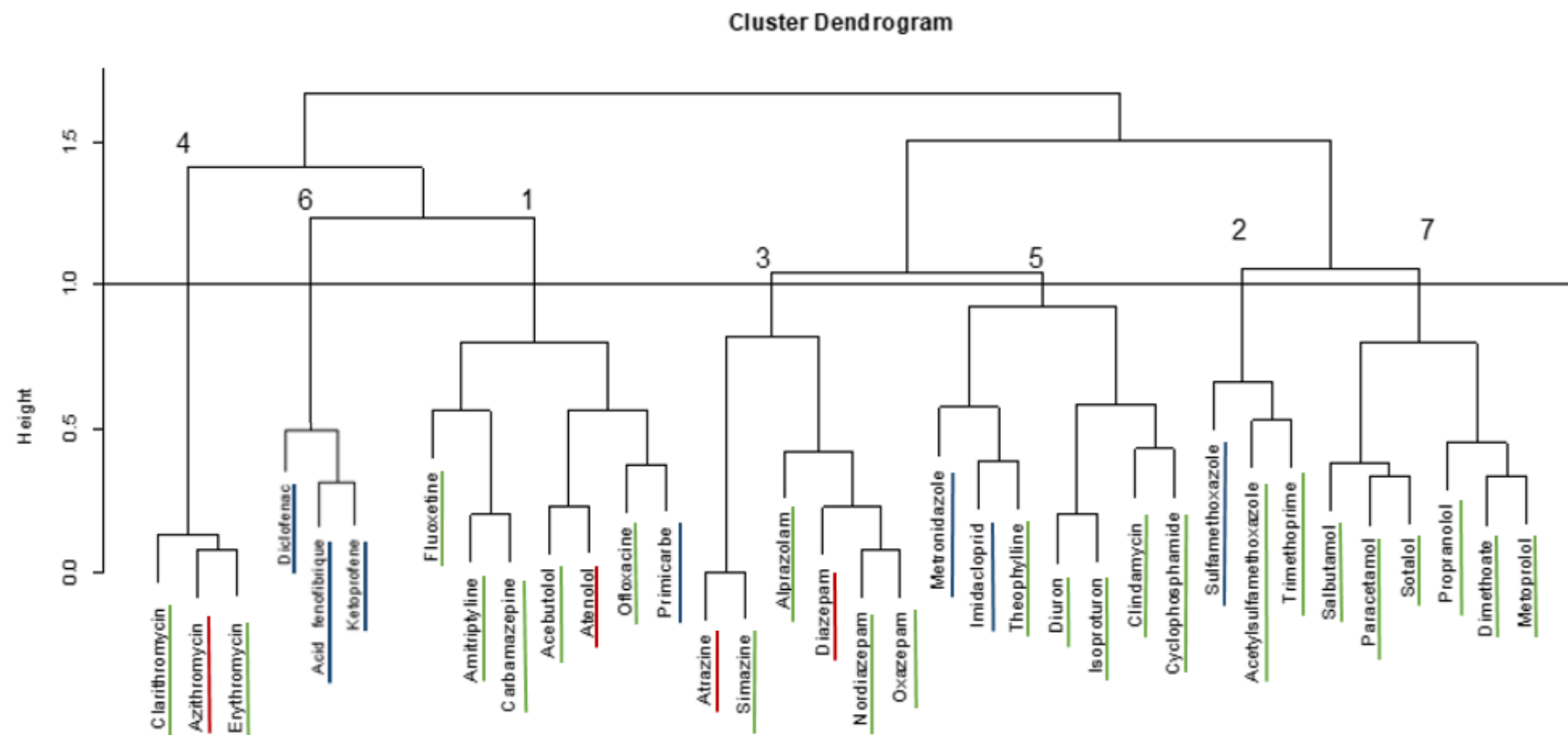
334 The micropollutants of the fast photodegradable group mostly have a nitro (METRO, IMI) or carboxylic
335 acid (AFENO, KETO, DICLO and PIRI) functional group. These chemical groups are characterized by
336 the transition $n \rightarrow \pi^*$, which leads to an excited state long enough to promote the photodegradation of
337 the micropollutant. We note the presence in the fast group of SULFA, whereas its degradation product,
338 ASUL, is classified in the medium group. The presence of a carbonyl with an amine group as a
339 substituent of the phenyl instead of an amine alone evidently makes the molecule more resistant to
340 photodegradation.

341 Among the micropollutants of the slow photodegradable group, AZI does not have a functional group
342 sensitive to photodegradation. In fact, ERY, CLA and CLIN are in the same case, but they belong to the
343 medium photodegradable group. The triazine function, as in ATZ and in SMZ, is a chromophore leading
344 to low quantum yields (Table 1). Thus, despite the presence of $-N=N-$ bonds (with transitions $n \rightarrow \pi^*$),
345 these two micropollutants belong to the medium photodegradable group. Finally, the 7-atom heterocycle
346 in DIAZ (slow photodegradable group) and NORD (the least photodegradable compound of the medium
347 group) is unfavourable to photochemical reactions. Thus, the use of electronic transitions does not
348 provide a full understanding of the proposed classification for micropollutants photodegradation. We
349 therefore undertook a statistical analysis to classify the micropollutants according to their chemical
350 functions in order to predict their direct photodegradation.

351 ***3.4.2. A new micropollutants classification in 7 classes according to their chemical functions***

352 To go further, we classified the 36 micropollutants according to their chemical functions, by testing the
353 ascending hierarchical classification according to the Ward criterion. The results of this classification
354 are presented in Figure 3.

355



356

357 *Figure 3. Classification of micropollutants into seven classes according to the Bray-Curtis distances on the inventory of functional groups (Table 2) with the*
 358 *Ward aggregation criteria. Micropollutants are underlined according to their classification in this study based on the direct photodegradation (fast group*
 359 *blue, medium green and slow red)*

360 A classification was obtained with seven classes of micropollutants according to a rather dichotomous
361 tree structure. Classes 1, 6 and 4 stand apart from the others. Only the distinction of class 4 from the
362 paired classes 1 and 6 is not dichotomous, suggesting a slight gradient effect. Class 4 consists of three
363 micropollutants with the highest molecular weights and no phenyl. The three micropollutants in class 6
364 have a carboxylic acid function.

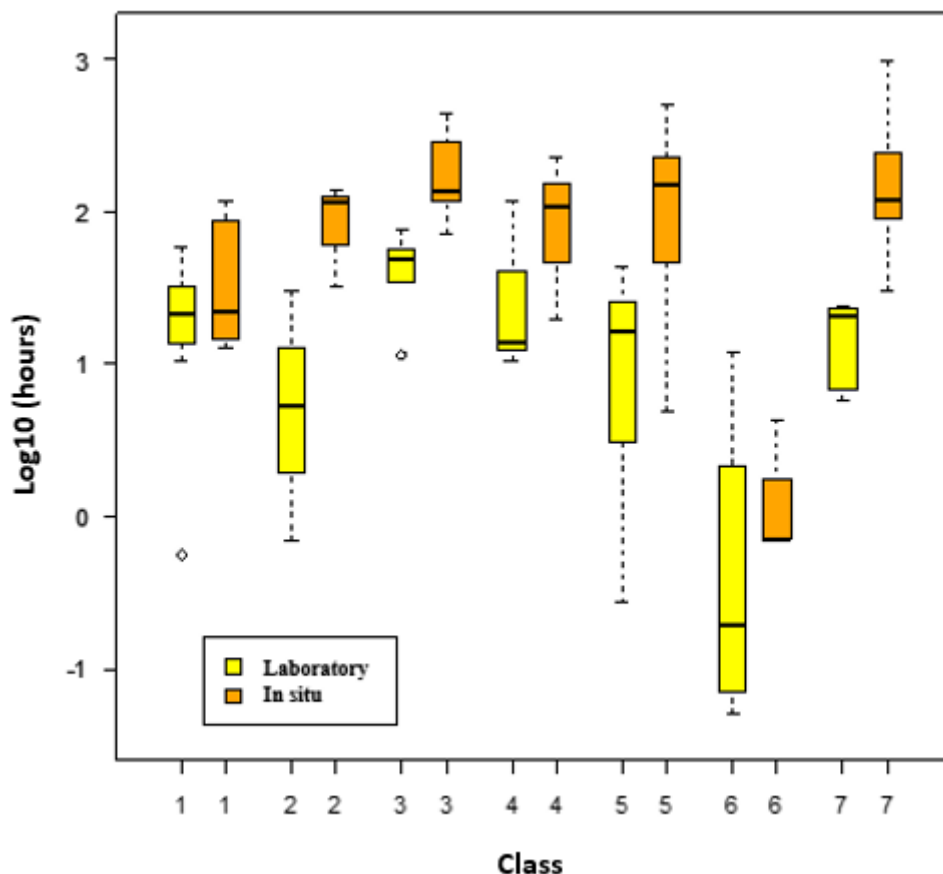
365 As explained in part 2.3.4, we performed a Correspondence Analysis (CoA) to project these seven
366 classes of micropollutants and their various chemical functions in the same space with reduced
367 dimensions (SPM 2).

368 The distribution of the values retained a three-dimensional space as carrying a significant proportion of
369 the total variability of the data. In this covalent space, class 5 remains fairly central (showing no
370 significant distinction on the basis of its functional groups composition). By contrast, class 4 is clearly
371 distinguished and without great variability among its members (the points being very close together in
372 the covalent space of the CoA). This distinction occurs because this class is composed of high molecular
373 weight micropollutants ($>700 \text{ g.mol}^{-1}$) with many chemical functions and no phenyl ($-\text{C}_6\text{H}_5$). From CoA
374 (SPM2), we observed that class 1 is characterized by a secondary amine function followed by an
375 isopropyl ($-\text{NH}-\text{CH}-(\text{CH}_3)-\text{CH}_3$). Class 2 is characterized by the presence of the sulfone ($\text{O}=\text{S}=\text{O}$)
376 and primary amine ($-\text{NH}_2$) bonds. Class 3 is characterized by the presence of the chloride ($-\text{Cl}$) and
377 imine bonds ($-\text{CH}=\text{N}-$). Classes 4 and 7 are characterized by a strong presence of hydroxyl ($-\text{OH}$) and
378 ether oxide ($-\text{O}-$) bonds. Class 6 is characterized by the carboxylic acid bond ($\text{OH}-\text{C}=\text{O}$). Finally, Class
379 5 is fairly central, and it is difficult to highlight specific chemical functions.

380 Seven classes of micropollutants have been formed according to their functional groups, The correlation
381 between $t_{1/2}$ and these groups was tested in the following part.

382 **3.4.3. Correlation between the $t_{1/2}$ values and the seven classes of micropollutants**

383 Here we are not comparing laboratory and *in situ* data, already discussed in part 3.2. The objective was
384 to identify the classes of micropollutants most sensitive to photodegradation and to conclude on the
385 sensitivity of their functional groups. The graphical representation of $\log t_{1/2}$ for the seven classes,
386 distinguishing the $t_{1/2}$ in laboratory from the $t_{1/2}$ *in situ* is illustrated in Figure 4.



387

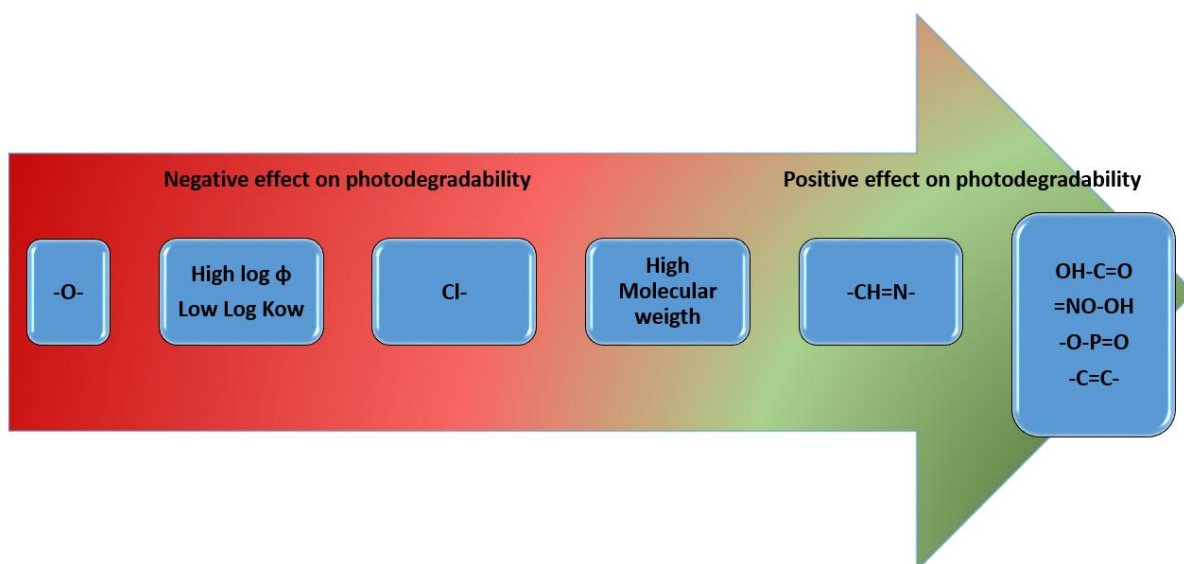
388 *Figure 4. Boxplot representation of $t_{1/2}$ in laboratory (yellow) and $t_{1/2}$ in situ (orange) for the seven*
 389 *classes of micropollutants.*

390 To determine whether the differences in $t_{1/2}$ between each class of micropollutants were significant ($p <$
 391 0.05), Kruskal-Wallis tests were supplemented by Dunn tests (Dinno, 2016). The results are available
 392 in SPM 2. Class 6 stands out strongly, with $t_{1/2}$ significantly lower than $t_{1/2}$ in laboratory of classes 1, 3,
 393 4, 5 and 7, and also significantly lower than $t_{1/2}$ in situ of classes 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7. Class 3 is characterized
 394 by $t_{1/2}$ significantly higher than those of classes 2, 5, 6 and 7 for the laboratory data and those of classes
 395 1 and 6 for the in situ data. Finally, the $t_{1/2}$ values of class 7 are significantly higher than those of class
 396 1. To explain the $t_{1/2}$ according to the functional groups, class 6, with the smallest $t_{1/2}$, is characterized
 397 by a carboxylic acid function, class 3 is characterized by the chloride and imine functions, and class 7
 398 is characterized by the hydroxyl and ether oxide functions, with the highest $t_{1/2}$. Hence the carboxylic
 399 acid function appears to be the most sensitive to photodegradation, while the chloride, imine, hydroxyl
 400 and ether functions are the most refractory.

401 **3.4.4. Which chemical properties or functions influence the photodegradability of**
 402 **micropollutants?**

403 In this part, we tested the influence of 19 physico-chemical variables on the $t_{1/2}$. The 19 tested variables
 404 are detailed in part 2.4.3. Among the 36 micropollutants, five micropollutants were considered because
 405 they do not have quantum yield value available in the literature: ASUL, AZI, FLUOX, NORF and PIRI.

406 The multiple linear regression model highlighted 11 variables that significantly influenced $t_{1/2}$
 407 laboratory and $t_{1/2}$ *in situ* ($p < 0.05$): molecular weight, $\log \Phi$, $\log K_{ow}$ and eight covalent bonds listed in
 408 Table 2 (OH-C=O, =NO-OH, C=N-O-, -O-, -Cl, -OP=O, -CH=N- and -C=C-). Two chemical
 409 functions had a significant influence on $t_{1/2}$ with the two datasets: OH-C=O and C=N-O-. Once again,
 410 the OH-C=O function induced low $t_{1/2}$ in both cases, confirming the sensitivity of this function to UV
 411 radiation (Hammami, 2008). The function C=N-O- is present only in the micropollutant SULFA and
 412 contributed to the decrease in laboratory $t_{1/2}$ but to the increase in *in situ* $t_{1/2}$. The =NO-OH function is
 413 present in IMI and METRO (class 5) and contributed to a decrease in laboratory $t_{1/2}$. The functions -O-
 414 and -CH=N- characteristic of class 3, contributed respectively to the increase and decrease in the $t_{1/2}$ *in*
 415 *situ*. The -Cl function contributed to the increase in the $t_{1/2}$ *in situ*, and is characteristic of class 7. Two
 416 new functions are specifically highlighted with this model and contributed to the lower $t_{1/2}$ *in situ* (-O-
 417 P=O and -C=C-). These results are consistent with the dissociation energies given in Table 2 and also
 418 support the method implemented by combining the dissociation energy of the covalent bonds with the
 419 compound photodegradability. This method allowed us to identify the eight most influential functional
 420 groups for the direct photodegradation. The molecular weight was evaluated as influential with an
 421 increase in $t_{1/2}$ in laboratory only for micropollutants with the highest molecular weights (>700 g.mol⁻¹).
 422 Log K_{ow} was significantly influential, with an increase in the $t_{1/2}$ *in situ* for decreasing log K_{ow} values.
 423 Finally, the quantum yield had a significant influence, with an increase in the $t_{1/2}$ *in situ* for increasing
 424 quantum yield values. These observations are summarized in Figure 5. The sign and rank of each
 425 variable allow to identify the influence on $t_{1/2}$ (- for a decrease in $t_{1/2}$ and + for an increase in $t_{1/2}$) (see
 426 details on the statistical test in SPM2).



427

428 *Figure 5. Assessment of the influence of selected chemical properties and chemical functions on the*
 429 *photodegradability of micropollutants*

430 **4. Conclusion**

431 This study evaluated the direct photodegradation of 36 organic micropollutants under controlled
432 laboratory conditions. These micropollutants were classified into three groups according to their $t_{1/2}$:
433 seven micropollutants in the fast group ($t_{1/2} < 2.5$ h), 24 micropollutants in the medium group (2.5 h $<$
434 $t_{1/2} < 50$ h), and five micropollutants in the slow group ($t_{1/2} > 50$ h). We then compared $t_{1/2}$ determined in
435 controlled laboratory conditions with $t_{1/2}$ previously determined in a CW. The use of correction factors
436 based on precise monitoring of the light intensity proved essential for this comparison. For future
437 studies, in situ or in laboratory, the determination of light intensity and its variation during the
438 experiment is a prerequisite for comparison of $t_{1/2}$ with other data sets. Finally, we statistically tested the
439 relationships between the chemical structure of micropollutants and their $t_{1/2}$. This enabled us to classify
440 the micropollutants into seven classes according to their chemical structures. These tests further
441 highlighted the chemical functions characteristic of micropollutants sensitive to photodegradation (OH–
442 C=O, C=N–O, =N–OH, –CH=N–, –O–P=O, –C=C–) and those with low sensitivity (–O–, –Cl). It would
443 be interesting to test the influence of these chemical functions on a larger set of micropollutants. It would
444 also be interesting to identify the structure of the photodegradation by-products in order to deduce the
445 degradation mechanisms and confirm or not the most sensitive chemical functions.

446

447 **Acknowledgments**

448 The authors thank the OFB (the French national Office for Biodiversity) for their financial support for
449 this work. We are also grateful to Philippe Bados, Amandine Daval, Thomas Brzokewicz and Clément
450 Crétollier from INRAE for their analytical and technical support.

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