

# Transformation of Organic Chemicals in Environmental Fate Metabolism Studies: A Comparison between Aquatic Sediment and Surface Water Test Systems (OECD 308 and 309)

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## Introduction

Higher-tier assessments include metabolism studies in aquatic sediment systems under aerobic and anaerobic incubation conditions (OECD 308) and aerobic degradation/ metabolism studies in natural surface water both with and without suspended sediment (OECD 309). Since the purpose of OECD 309 studies has

recently been under discussion, the presented data intends to provide an insight into the influence of sediment on the transformation and/ or degradation velocity of organic chemicals in water/ sediment when compared to water only test systems.

## Materials and Methods

OECD 308: Aerobic or anaerobic aquatic sediment test system

Studies performed at IES Ltd (2012-2017): 43 / Clients: 21

OECD 309: Surface water test system

Studies performed at IES Ltd (2012-2017): 46 / Clients: 18

No. of test items for which both (aerobic) study types have been conducted: 9

| Study type / parameter                                    | OECD 308   | OECD 309   |
|---|--|--|
| <sup>14</sup> C-labelled test item(s)                     | All = 9 (with 1 to 2 labels)   |  |
| Water solubility  | 0.023-1449 mg/L  |  |
| Specific activity   | 1.8-11.9 MBq/mg  |  |
| Test concentrations                                       | 0.010-36.6 mg/L  | Low dose: 0.01 mg/L<br>High dose: 0.05-0.10 mg/L |
| Solvents  | Water or organic solvents (OECD 309 including solvent control)   |  |
| Source of water and/or sediment                           | Lake, pond or river with ~pH 8 and 6-8 mg O <sub>2</sub> /L  |  |
| Suspended solids (OECD 309)                               | -  | One study with 1 g/L                             |
| Temperature/light   | Incubation at 20-22°C in the dark  |  |
| Test duration   | ~100 days  | 60 (-90) days                                    |
| Replicates  | Duplicate samples at each interval   |  |
| Volume  | ~550-700 mL water and ~150-250 g wet sediment (sediment/water volume ratio between 1:3 and 1:4) in 1 L all-glass metabolism flasks | 100-160 mL water in 300 mL Erlenmeyer flasks     |
| Test system   | Flow-through with NaOH and Ethylene glycol traps. Static system (OECD 308) or continuous agitation by magnetic stirrer (OECD 309)  |  |
| Degradation reference item (to assess microbial activity) | -  | Benzoic acid                                     |
| Microbial biomass (sediment)                              | Fumigation method [1]  | -  |

Table 1: Data on aerobic OECD 308 & 309 studies performed at IES Ltd

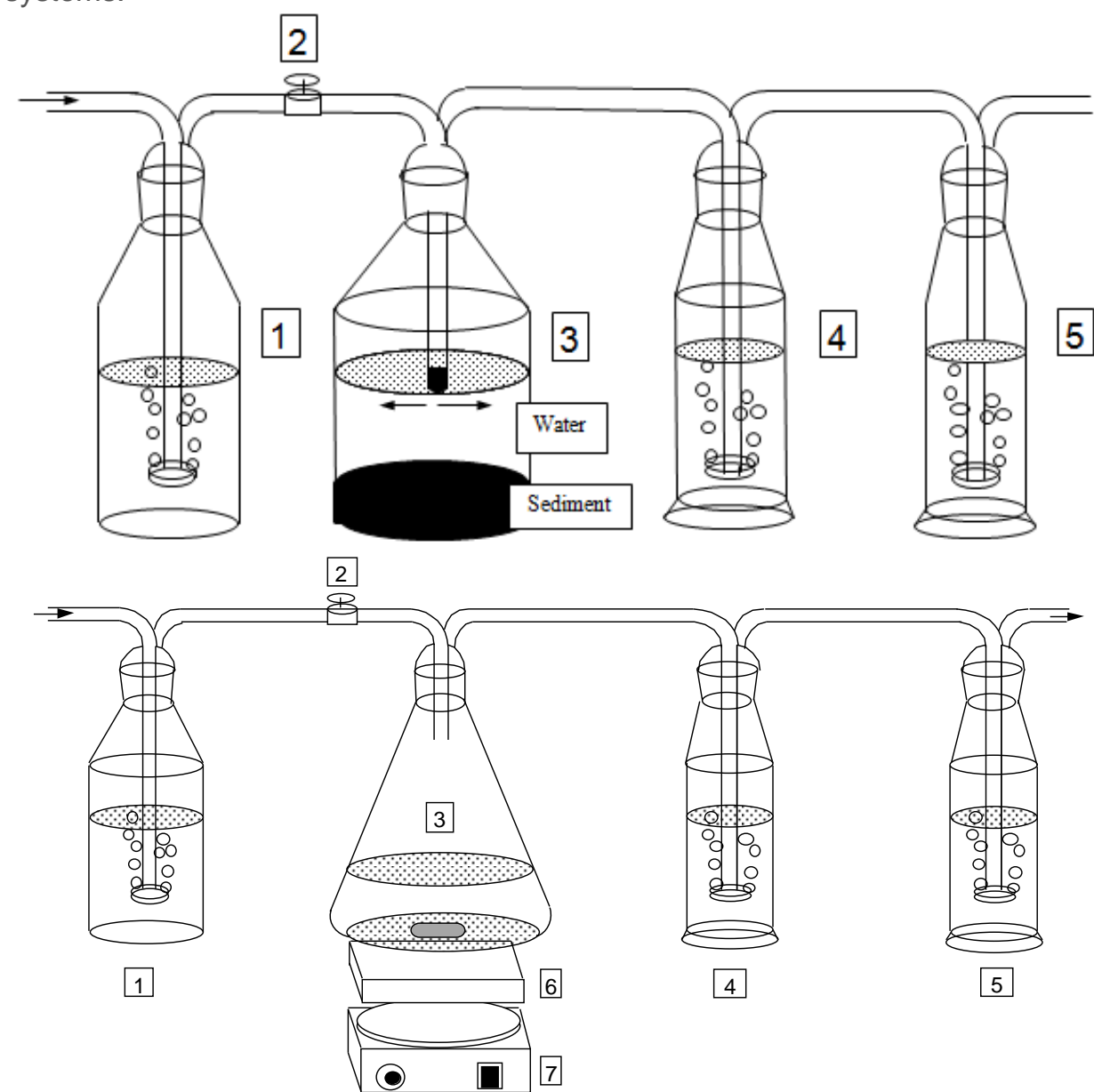


Figure 1: Typical OECD 308 (top) and OECD 309 (bottom) test apparatus  
(1) Water to moisten incoming air. (2) Valve to adjust the air flow. (3) Metabolism flask containing sediment and overlaying water (OECD 308) or Erlenmeyer flask containing natural water and eventually suspended sediment (gently stirred, OECD 309). (4) Ethylene glycol trap for org. volatiles. (5) 2N NaOH trap for <sup>14</sup>CO<sub>2</sub>. (6) Insulating foam. (7) Magnetic stirrer

## Results

| Test item | OECD 308                 |                                |                 |      | OECD 309                                  |                                      |                     |                 |
|-----------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|------|---|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
|           | Major Metabolite(s)      | DT <sub>50</sub> Water/Total   | CO <sub>2</sub> | NER  | Major Metabolite(s)                       | DT <sub>50</sub> Water Low/High Dose | CO <sub>2</sub>     | Other Volatiles |
| 1         | M1 (<10%), M2 (<30%)     | 1-4h / 3-4d                    | ≤35%            | ≤50% | M1 (≤12%), M3 (≤16%), M4 (≤18%), M5 (≤9%) | n.a. / 4-7d                          | ≤60% (LD) ≤30% (HD) | <1%             |
| 2         | none                     | 85d / 95d                      | ≤1%             | ≤8%  | none                                      | stable                               | <3%                 | <1%             |
| 3         | up to 5, M1 (≤36% total) | 0.6d / 0.6d (no parent in sed) | ≤53%            | ≤35% | up to 6, M1 (≤28%)                        | n.a. / 2.5d                          | <57% (LD) <32% (HD) | <3%             |
| 4         | M1 (≤44% wat; ≤20% sed)  | 90d / 100d                     | ≤7%             | <8%  | M1 (≤16%)                                 | 3d (volatile parent)                 | <2%                 | <1%             |
| 5         | M1 (≤77%), M2 (<98%)     | 0.2d / 0.7d                    | ≤13%            | <68% | M1 (≤100%), M2 (≤100%)                    | <1d                                  | ≤15%                | <46%            |
| 6         | M1 (≤11%, sed)           | 3-4d / 7-9d                    | ≤26%            | ≤82% | none                                      | 31d / 120d                           | ≤30% (LD) ≤50% (HD) | <1%             |
| 7         | none                     | 57-86h / stable                | <4%             | <6%  | none                                      | stable                               | <2%                 | <1%             |
| 8         | M1 (≤19%, wat)           | 1d / 50d                       | ≤45%            | ≤50% | M1 (≤20%)                                 | 41d / 24d                            | ≤6%                 | <4%             |
| 9         | none                     | 19.5d / 28d                    | <7%             | <36% | none                                      | stable                               | <2%                 | <1%             |

Values in % of applied radioactivity. NER: Non-extractable residues. LD: Low dose. HD: High dose. sed: Sediment. wat: Water. n.a.: Not available

Table 2: Degradation results for each of the nine test items in the OECD 308 and 309 test systems

## Summary

- The half-life (DT<sub>50</sub>) of tested compounds tends to be higher in OECD 309 than in OECD 308 studies, where sediment present.
- For three out of nine test compounds, the formation and/or relative amount of metabolites significantly differed between both study types.
- No correlation between water solubility and study outcome was observed.
- For one compound with low water solubility, suspended soil particles (1 g/L; OECD 309) tend to slightly shorten test item dissipation rates for the water phase (data overview not shown on present poster). Formation of different metabolites was correlated to the test system: Differences were observed between pond and river, as well as for the presence of suspended soil.

However, for all points mentioned above, exceptions have been observed.

## References

- [1] Vance E.D., Brookes P.C. and Jenkinson D.S., 1987. An extraction method for measuring soil microbial C. Soil Biol. Biochem. 19, 703-708.

## Conclusion

- The absence of sediment (pelagic test) may lead to diverse degradation behavior.
- In general, OECD 308 studies may be more appropriate for simulating stagnant systems (e.g. ponds), while OECD 309 studies may better reflect disturbed i.e. flowing systems (e.g. rivers).
- Considering the relative simplicity in conducting OECD 309 studies, this study type may offer a convenient behavior assessment, especially for more delicate compounds, prior to conducting more sophisticated OECD 308 studies.