

Accepted Manuscript

Occurrence of pharmaceuticals and personal care products in effluent-dominated Saudi Arabian coastal waters of the Red Sea

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PII: S0045-6535(17)30283-7

DOI: [10.1016/j.chemosphere.2017.02.095](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chemosphere.2017.02.095)

Reference: CHEM 18858

To appear in: *ECSN*

Received Date: 4 December 2016

Revised Date: 17 February 2017

Accepted Date: 18 February 2017

Please cite this article as: Ali, A.M., Rønning, H.T., Al Arif, W.M., Kallenborn, R., Al-Lihaibi, S.S., Occurrence of pharmaceuticals and personal care products in effluent-dominated Saudi Arabian coastal waters of the Red Sea, *Chemosphere* (2017), doi: 10.1016/j.chemosphere.2017.02.095.

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1 **Occurrence of pharmaceuticals and personal care products in effluent-dominated Saudi**
2 **Arabian coastal waters of the Red Sea**

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11 **Abstract**

12 The occurrence of selected pharmaceuticals and personal care products (PPCPs) and the pesticide atrazine
13 were investigated in seawater samples collected from stations located at effluent dominated sites in the
14 Saudi Arabian coastal waters of the Red Sea. PPCPs were analysed using solid phase extraction (SPE)
15 followed by high performance liquid chromatography – tandem mass spectrometry (HPLC-MS/MS). A
16 multi component method for the ultra-trace level quantification of 13 target PPCPs in Seawater was
17 developed and validated for the here performed study. The method procedure is described in detail in the
18 supplementary material section. 26 samples from 7 distinct locations (2 directly influenced by continuous
19 sewage release) were chosen for the sampling of surface seawater. Based upon local sales information, 25
20 target substances (20 PPCPs, 4 pesticides and 1 stimulant) were chosen for the here reported method
21 development. Thirteen PPCPs were detected and quantified in a total of 26 seawater samples. Metformin,
22 diclofenac, acetaminophen, and caffeine were identified as the most abundant PPCPs, detected in maximum
23 concentration higher than 3 µg/L (upper quantification limit for the here developed method).
24 Concentrations were in the range of 7– >3000 (metformin), <LOQ – 2379 ng/L (acetaminophen) and 62–
25 >3000 ng/L (caffeine). The contribution of direct sewage release on the PPCP levels detected was obvious,
26 the target PPCPs were detected in the Al-Arbaeen and Al-Shabab coastal lagoons in high concentrations

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