

A Service of

ZBU

Leibniz-Informationszentrum Wirtschaft Leibniz Information Centre for Economics

Bosio, M. et al.

Article

Electrochemical oxidation of paraben compounds and the effects of byproducts on neuronal activity

Energy Reports

Provided in Cooperation with:

Elsevier

Suggested Citation: Bosio, M. et al. (2020) : Electrochemical oxidation of paraben compounds and the effects of byproducts on neuronal activity, Energy Reports, ISSN 2352-4847, Elsevier, Amsterdam, Vol. 6, Iss. 1, pp. 903-908, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.egyr.2019.11.156

This Version is available at: https://hdl.handle.net/10419/243841

Standard-Nutzungsbedingungen:

Die Dokumente auf EconStor dürfen zu eigenen wissenschaftlichen Zwecken und zum Privatgebrauch gespeichert und kopiert werden.

Sie dürfen die Dokumente nicht für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, öffentlich zugänglich machen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.

Sofern die Verfasser die Dokumente unter Open-Content-Lizenzen (insbesondere CC-Lizenzen) zur Verfügung gestellt haben sollten, gelten abweichend von diesen Nutzungsbedingungen die in der dort genannten Lizenz gewährten Nutzungsrechte.

Terms of use:

Documents in EconStor may be saved and copied for your personal and scholarly purposes.

You are not to copy documents for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the documents publicly, to make them publicly available on the internet. or to distribute or otherwise use the documents in public.

If the documents have been made available under an Open Content Licence (especially Creative Commons Licences), you may exercise further usage rights as specified in the indicated licence.



NC ND https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/







Available online at www.sciencedirect.com



Energy Reports 6 (2020) 903-908



International Conference on Energy and Environment Research, ICEER 2019, 6th, 22–25 July 2019, The University of Aveiro, Portugal

Electrochemical oxidation of paraben compounds and the effects of byproducts on neuronal activity

M. Bosio^{a,b,c,*}, B. Souza-Chaves^{b,c,d}, J. Gomes^b, M. Gmurek^e, R. Martins^b, E. Saggioro^f, M. Dezotti^a, J.P. Bassin^a, M.E. Quinta-Ferreira^c, R.M. Quinta-Ferreira^b

^a Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, COPPE – Chemical Engineering Program, Centro de Tecnologia – Cidade Universitária – Bloco G – Sala 115, Rio de Janeiro – 21941-909, Brazil

^b CIEPQPF – Chemical Engineering Processes and Forest Products Research Center, Department of Chemical Engineering, University of Coimbra, Rua Sílvio Lima, Coimbra – 3030-790, Portugal

^c Center for Neuroscience and Cell Biology and Physics Department, University of Coimbra, Rua Larga, Coimbra – 3004-516, Portugal

^d Department of Chemical & Environmental Engineering, University of Arizona, 1133 E.James E. Rogers Way, Tucson, AZ 85721, USA

^e Faculty of Process and Environmental Engineering, Department of Bioprocess Engineering Lodz University of Technology, Wolczanska 213, 90-924 Lodz, Poland

^f Sanitation and Environment Health Department, Sergio Arouca National School of Public Health, Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, Avenida Leopoldo Bulhões, 1480, Rio de Janeiro – 21041-210, Brazil

Received 26 November 2019; accepted 27 November 2019

Abstract

Some organic recalcitrant compounds are not degraded by conventional water treatment systems, making necessary the use of advanced technologies to eliminate these substances. Advanced Oxidation Processes (AOPs) have been extensively proposed to remove emerging contaminants aiming potable water reuse, but literature barely addresses neurotoxic effects of AOPs residual byproducts. These processes involve high costs associated with the electricity, maintenance and oxidizing agent used. However, electrochemical AOPs are techniques based on electron transfer, thus being a clean form of energy and very efficient in the degradation of organic pollutants. Parabens are naturally found in plant sources but most are chemically synthesized, requiring careful treatment to not disturb the environment. In this study, a mixture of parabens (10 mg L⁻¹ each) was degraded by an electrochemical oxidation (EO) system with a Ti/Pt anode. Some parameters, such as the current density (25, 75 and 125 A m⁻²) and the electrolyte type and concentration (1.5, 3.0 and 5.0 g NaCl L⁻¹ and 3.0 g Na₂SO₄ L⁻¹) were changed. The best results were obtained with 125 A m⁻² and 3.0 g NaCl L⁻¹, which led to the complete degradation of the parabens present in the mixture, after 10 min. In addition to these studies neurotoxicity tests were also performed using the solutions of interest, before and after the EO treatment. It was observed, using the reactive oxygen species (ROS) fluorescent indicator H_2 DCFDA, that the non-treated solution caused an increase in ROS formation with a signal amplitude of 0.84 ± 0.20 above the baseline. After the EO process the parabens mixture did not lead to a significant ROS change.

E-mail address: morganabosio@yahoo.com.br (M. Bosio).

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.egyr.2019.11.156

^{*} Corresponding author at: Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, COPPE – Chemical Engineering Program, Centro de Tecnologia – Cidade Universitária – Bloco G – Sala 115, Rio de Janeiro – 21941-909, Brazil.

^{2352-4847/© 2019} Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (http://creativecommons.org/ licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

Peer-review under responsibility of the scientific committee of the International Conference on Energy and Environment Research, ICEER 2019.

The solution to bridge the problem of high electricity costs may be replacing it with solar energy, low cost catalysts and other treatment processes involving renewable and eco-friendly energy. © 2019 Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

Peer-review under responsibility of the scientific committee of the International Conference on Energy and Environment Research, ICEER 2019.

Keywords: Bioenergy; Advanced oxidative process (AOPs); Contaminants of emerging concern (CECs); Hippocampal slices; Neurotoxicity; Reactive oxygen species (ROS)

1. Introduction

The use of renewable energy has been an alternative to the use of fossil fuels, which have a harmful effect on the environment [1]. Biomass is an abundant resource for bioenergy production, allowing the technological advancement the extraction of some products and the conversion of waste for bioenergy purposes [2]. Frequent use of natural paraben, especially in cosmetics, can generate a large amount of biomass that can be used to produce bioenergy [3].

The appearance of thousands of non-biodegradable compounds hinders the correct disposal of solid or liquid materials. An aggravating factor occurs when compounds are disposed directly in surface water without any or inadequate treatment. In these cases these substances can affect the local ecosystem and can bioaccumulate in plants and animals and even cause behavioral changes in small animals [4,5].

Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CECs) are any chemical discovered in water or environment that had not previously been detected, with potential significant impact on human health and aquatic life. CECs are present in several regions of the world such as India [6], Brazil [7] and Portugal [8]. As conventional systems do not allow efficient CECs removal, great attention has been raised towards Advanced Oxidative Processes (AOPs) that have the capacity to degrade recalcitrant compounds due to the presence of hydroxyl radicals (.OH), and can lead to complete mineralization in CO_2 and H_2O [9,10].

The Electrochemical Oxidation (EO) process is an AOP that generally requires lower temperature, less space, and produce fewer by-products. In the EO system, various types of anode can be used and the degradation of the compounds can occur directly on the surface of the electrode, or indirectly in the reaction medium, promoted mainly by radicals from the electrolytes [11]. Many studies were carried out using this process and it was successful in removing several compounds such as pharmaceuticals [12], dyes [13] and phenol [14]. In anodic oxidation, pollutant destruction occurs by electron transfer on the electrode surface. This being a direct method, the effectiveness of pollutant removal is greater as it avoids two fundamental aspects: mass transfer limitations and electrode surface poisoning [12,13].

In this study were used parabens which are esters of 4-hydroxybenzoic acid. They are found naturally in some vegetables, plants and can be produced by bacteria. When synthesized they can be applied in the chemical and electrical industries as a material for polymer and cosmetic production. Although a high energy demand is required to degrade the compounds by EO, this process is necessary since the compounds must not reach the environment as they may bioaccumulate or cause adverse effects on animals and plants [3].

The goal of this study was to investigate the ROS production in the CA3 region of Wistar rat hippocampus with a mixture of parabens before and after the EO treatment. The electrochemical oxidation was performed with Ti/Pt anode and different parameters such as current density (25, 75 or 125 A m⁻²) and the concentration of different electrolytes (1.5 g NaCl L⁻¹; 3.0 g NaCl L⁻¹, 5.0 g NaCl L⁻¹, or 3.0 g Na₂SO₄ L⁻¹) were assessed to select the best condition. A mixture of five parabens (10 mg L⁻¹ each) namely methylparaben (MeP), ethylparaben (EtP), propylparaben (PrP), butylparaben (BuP) and benzylparaben (BeP) was used in the experiments

In electrochemical AOPs the advantage is that the energy spent can be reduced by placing electrochemical reagents *in situ*. In this way, the application of this technique is optimized through new low cost catalytic materials, reducing energy production and developing more efficient and economically viable techniques [9,11]. Several studies have addressed the replacement of energy from thermoelectric and hydroelectric plants by the generation of electricity through solar energy. Thus, solar energy is capable of meeting the needs of processes such as AOPs, especially in countries with high insolation rates [2,10].

2. Material and methods

2.1. Chemicals and setup

The parabens MeP, EtP, PrP, BuP, BeP and the reagents CH₃CN, NaCl, Na₂SO₄, CaCl₂, MgCl₂, KCl, NaHCO₃, C₆H₁₂O₆, NaH₂PO₄ were obtained from Sigma-Aldrich and H₂DCFDA (2', 7'-dichlorodihydrofluorescein diacetate) was obtained from Life Technologies. The solution of these parabens (10 mg L⁻¹ each) in ultrapure water (Interlab Direct-Pure) was used in electrochemical oxidation with different current density (25, 75 or 125 A m⁻²) and concentration and type of electrolyte (1.5 g NaCl L⁻¹; 3.0 g NaCl L⁻¹, 5.0 g NaCl L⁻¹, or 3.0 g Na₂SO₄ L⁻¹). The reactor had a volume of 500 mL magnetic stirring and the electrodes used were titanium-platinum (Ti/Pt) as anode and a stainless steel as cathode, with the area of 20 cm² (8.0 cm x 2.5 cm).

The concentration of the parabens was quantified on high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) from Shimadzu with a diode-array detector. A C18 chromatography column from SiliaChrom was used at 40 °C and the injection volume of the samples was 20 μ L with a mobile phase consisted by a mixture of methanol 50% and acid water (0.1% orthophosphoric acid) 50% and a flow rate of 0.5 mL min⁻¹.

2.2. Neurotoxicity procedure

The neurotoxicity studies were performed in hippocampal slices (400 μ m thick) from pregnant Wistar rats (8–16 weeks old and 14–18 days of gestation), at CA3 region. After extracting the hippocampal slices, they were incubated in oxygenated (5% O₂,95% CO₂) extracellular artificial cerebrospinal fluid (ACSF) with the following composition (in mM): 10 D-Glucose, 24 NaHCO₃, 1.25 NaH₂PO₄, 2.0 MgCl₂, 2.0 CaCl₂, 124 NaCl and 3.5 KCl, at pH 7.4. Subsequently the slices were incubated in ACSF solution containing the ROS indicator H₂DCFDA (20 μ M), for one hour, at room temperature. After that period the slices were transferred to a chamber in the microscope setup where they were perfused, for 30 min periods, with ACSF or a parabens medium, at 32 °C, with a flow rate of 1.5 mL min⁻¹. The final ACSF perfusion aimed to ascertain if the parabens evoked signals returned to the initial level. All the neurotoxicity experiments were run in triplicate.

A fluorescence microscope, Zeiss Axioskop, equipped with a water immersion objective (40x, N.A. 0.75, 1.6 mm working distance), a tungsten/halogen lamp (12 V, 100 W) and excitation and emission filters of 480 nm and > 500 nm, respectively, were used for the detection of the optical signals. These were recorded through a photodiode from Hammamatsu (K2G 1336, 1.0 mm²), using a 16 bit analog to digital converter from National Instruments, that processed the data using the Signal Express[®] software from National Instruments. The correction of the optical signals was performed by constant autofluorescence, represent the ratio of the total fluorescence (F_T) over baseline fluorescence (F₀) obtained as the average of the first 10 points. Data represent the mean \pm S.E.M. Statistical significance was assessed by means of the Mann–Whitney U test, p < 0.05 was considered significant. Processes and operating systems of electrochemical oxidation and neurotoxicity studies can be visualized in Fig. 1.



Fig. 1. Operational system: 1 - Mixture of parabens added to the reactor for electrochemical oxidation; 2 - Solution of parabens after electrochemical oxidation; 3 - Treated effluent used in neurotoxicity studies; 4 - Extraction of Wistar rat hippocampus for the neurotoxicity assays; 5 - Hippocampal slice to be perfused by a treated or untreated solution; 6 - Fluorescence ROS signals.



Fig. 2. Degradation of the parabens MeP, EtP, PrP, BuP and BeP in ultrapure water by electrochemical oxidation with different times and current densities (10 min: 25, 75 and 125 A m⁻² and 20 min: 25 and 75 A m⁻²). 3.0 gNaCl L⁻¹, pH = 7 and T = 25 °C.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Effects of the current density

The increase in current density generates a greater production of radicals, which will degrade the compounds faster and with greater efficiency [15]. According to Fig. 2, the increase in current density led to an increase in the degradation of all the parabens. Applying a current density of 125 A m⁻² the complete parabens degradation occurred in 10 min. However when 25 A m⁻² and 75 A m⁻² were applied, the degradation of the compounds varied between $48 \pm 3\%$ and $82 \pm 5\%$, respectively. After 20 min of EO applying 75 A m⁻² the complete degradation of the parabens occurred, whereas for 25 A m⁻² the degradation ranged between 71 and 78%. For the complete degradation of the parabens with 25 A m⁻², 30 min was necessary to eliminate BuP and BeP and 45 min to degrade MeP, EtP and PrP (Data not shown). Similar results are observed in the literature [16–18].

3.2. Effect of the electrolytes

The addition of electrolytes increases conductivity and promotes the production of radicals that will eliminate the organic compounds [19]. However, the concentration or type of electrolyte can directly influence the reactions, since each compound has properties and generates different radicals [20]. Here the degradation of the parabens was evaluated using NaCl (1.5, 3.0 and 5.0 g L⁻¹) and Na₂SO₄ (3.0 g L⁻¹).

According to Fig. 3, the increase of NaCl concentration from 1.5 g L⁻¹ to 3.0 g L⁻¹ promoted an increase in the elimination of parabens that varied from 12 to 29%. When increasing NaCl concentration to 5.0 g L⁻¹, similar degradation profiles were achieved compared to 3.0 g L⁻¹, and the excess of electrolyte did not contribute to the parabens removal. Similar results were previously described [21]. There is a high energy demand for the complete elimination of compounds, however this contributes to the effluent being disposed cleaner into the environment.

Fig. 3. also present the low efficiency in the degradation of the parabens when using 3.0 g Na₂SO₄ L⁻¹. The removal of MeP, EtP, PrP, BuP and BeP was 5.1, 7.3, 13.9, 2.4 and 2.5%, respectively. The decrease in the efficiency when applying Na₂SO₄ compared to NaCl was also observed by [22] and is probably associated to the production of radicals of species $S_2O_8^{-2}$, which are less reactive with organic compounds than the radicals formed by NaCl [23].

3.3. Neurotoxicity studies

In Fig. 4 A it is possible to observe changes in ROS production, which occur when the mixture of parabens gets in contact with the hippocampal slices, during the period represented by the gray bar. The signals increase initially reaching a maximum amplitude (0.84 ± 0.20 , at 20–30 min, n = 3) above the baseline.

This suggests that the compounds present in the parabens mixture acted within the cells, altering their normal functioning and consequently the synaptic activity that affects the energy production in mitochondria [24]. This



Fig. 3. Degradation of the parabens MeP, EtP, PrP, BuP and BeP in ultrapure water by electrochemical oxidation with different concentrations and types of electrolyte (NaCl: 1.5, 3.0 and 5.0 g L⁻¹ and Na₂SO₄: 3.0 g L⁻¹). 75 A m⁻², pH = 7 and T = 25 °C.



Fig. 4. ROS signals from brain slices evoked by the synthetic effluent (applied during the period indicated by the gray bar) of the paraben mixture: before EO treatment (A) and after EO treatment (pH 7.4, 3 g NaCl L^{-1} , 125 A m^{-2}) (B).

process causes oxidative stress, a behavior in which the cell produces ROS in high amounts that can lead to cell death [25]. However, upon returning to the ACSF solution, the signals decreased to the baseline, indicating that the effect is reversible.

In Fig. 4 B the slices were in contact with the EO treated (125 A m⁻², 3.0 g NaCl L⁻¹, 10 min) parabens solution, during the period indicated by the gray bar. In this case there were no significant changes in the ROS signals, supporting the idea that the applied treatment was efficient in the elimination of the neurotoxic effects. Another study [26] reported a similar result with a mixture of parabens (methylparaben, ethylparaben, propylparaben, benzylparaben and butylparaben, 10 mg L⁻¹ each), treated by ozonation.

4. Conclusion

The use of biomass from paraben extraction plants as a source for renewable energy production is very promising. The degradation of the parabens was successfully achieved using an electrochemical oxidation process. The increase of current density led to an increase in the production of highly oxidative radicals that promoted the elimination of the paraben compounds. The electrolyte concentration may influence the degradation rate up to the limit of saturation, and the type of electrolyte has a high influence on the degradation of the compounds. Neurotoxicity assays showed a high effect of the non-treated solution, but the electrochemical oxidation was efficient in the degradation of the compounds that caused the ROS changes, thus eliminating, under the mentioned conditions, the neurotoxic actions. AOPs are growing processes for wastewater treatment, by optimizing some efficiency factors. One of the main ones is the cost of energy sources, in this case the chemical reagent, and aother is the development of new catalytic materials that facilitate the use of sunlight.

Acknowledgments

Morgana Bosio acknowledges her Ph.D fellowship (Process 141877/2016-2) supported by CNPq, Brazil. Bianca Souza-Chaves acknowledges her PDJ postdoctoral scholarship (Process 152099/2016-6) supported by CNPq, Brazil. The neuronal studies were funded by the strategic project, Brazil UID/NEU/04539/2013. The authors thank the Center for Neuroscience and Cell Biology (CNC) of the University of Coimbra for providing the rat brains.

References

- [1] Yuan Tiller, Al-Ahmad Stewart, Stewart Jr. Plants to power: bioenergy to fuel the future. Trends Plant Sci 2008;13:421-9.
- [2] Ragauskas Williams, Davison Britovsek, Cairney Eckert, Frederick Jr, Hallett Leak, Liotta Mielenz, Murphy Templer. The path forward for biofuels and biomaterials. Science 2006;311:484–9.
- [3] Kerdudo Burger, Merck Dingas, Rolland Michel, Fernandez. Development of a natural ingredient natural preservative: A case study. C R Chim 2016;19:1077–89.
- [4] Souza Marinho, Moreira Dezotti, Boaventura Vilar. Photo-Fenton oxidation of 3-amino-5-methylisoxazole: a by-product from biological breakdown of some pharmaceutical compounds. Environ Sci Pollut Res 2017;24:6195–204.
- [5] Ridruejo Centellas, Cabot Sirés, Brillas. Electrochemical fenton-based treatment of tetracaine in synthetic and urban wastewater using active and non-active anodes. Water Res 2018;128:71–81.
- [6] Williams Kookana, Mehta Yadav, Tailor Maheshwari. Emerging contaminants in a river receiving untreated wastewater from an Indian urban centre. Sci Total Environ 2019;647:1256–65.
- [7] Pereira Maranho, Cortez Pusceddu, Santos Ribeiro, et al. Occurrence of pharmaceuticals and cocaine in a Brazilian coastal zone. Sci Total Environ 2016;549:148–54.
- [8] Pereira Silva, Laranjeiro Meisel, Lino Pena. Human pharmaceuticals in Portuguese rivers : The impact of water scarcity in the environmental risk. Sci Total Environ 2017;609:1182–91.
- [9] Bosio Satyro, Bassin Saggioro, Dezotti. Removal of pharmaceutically active compounds from synthetic and real aqueous mixtures and simultaneous disinfection by supported. Environ Sci Pollut Res 2018;26:4288–99.
- [10] Klidi Clematis, Paola Gadri, Ammar Panizza. Electrochemical oxidation of crystal violet using a BDD anode with a solid polymer electrolyte. Sep Purif Technol 2019;208:178–83.
- [11] Liu Hu, Lo. Direct and indirect electrochemical oxidation of amine-containing pharmaceuticals using graphite electrodes. J Hard Mater 2019;366:592–605.
- [12] Haidar Dirany, Sirés Oturan, Oturan. Electrochemical degradation of the antibiotic sulfachloropyridazine by hydroxyl radicals generated at a BDD anode. Chemosphere 2013;91:1304–9.
- [13] Alcocer Picos, Uribe Pérez, Peralta-Hernandez. Comparative study for degradation of industrial dyes by electrochemical advanced oxidation processes with BDD anode in a laboratory stirred tank reactor. Chemosphere 2018;205:682–9.
- [14] Wang Xu, Wang Liang, Wei Hu, et al. Preparation and characterization of a novel ce doped PbO₂ electrode based on NiO modified Ti/TiO₂ NTs substrate for the electrocatalytic degradation of phenol wastewater. Electrochim Acta 2017;247:535–47.
- [15] Thiam Sirés, Garrido Rodríguez, Brillas. Effect of anions on electrochemical degradation of azo dye Carmoisine (Acid Red 14) using a BDD anode and air-diffusion cathode. Sep Purif Technol 2015;140:43–52.
- [16] Clematis Cerisola, Panizza. Electrochemical oxidation of a synthetic dye using a BDD anode with a solid polymer electrolyte. Electrochem Commun 2017;75:21–4.
- [17] Candia-Onfray Espinoza, Sabino Salazar. Treatment of winery wastewater by anodic oxidation using BDD electrode. Chemosphere 2018;206:709–17.
- [18] Loos Scheers, Eyck Schepdael, Adams Bruggen, et al. Electrochemical oxidation of key pharmaceuticals using a boron doped diamond electrode. Sep Purif Technol 2018;195:184–91.
- [19] Migliorini Couto, Alves Roberto, Lanza. Influence of supporting electrolytes on RO 16 dye electrochemical oxidation using boron doped diamond electrodes. Mater Res 2017;20:584–91.
- [20] Salazar Contreras, Mansilla Yá, Salazar. Electrochemical degradation of the antihypertensive losartan in aqueous medium by electro-oxidation with boron-doped diamond electrode. J Hard Mater 2016;319:84–92.
- [21] Fajardo Seca, Martins Corceiro, Freitas Quinta-Ferreira, et al. Electrochemical oxidation of phenolic wastewaters using a batch-stirred reactor with NaCl electrolyte and Ti/RuO₂anodes. J Electroanal Soc 2017;785:180–9.
- [22] Fajardo Seca, Martins Corceiro, Vieira Quinta-Ferreira, et al. Phenolic wastewaters depuration by electrochemical oxidation process using Ti/IrO₂ anodes. Environ Sci Pollut Res 2017;24:7521–33.
- [23] Panizza Cerisola. Direct and mediated anodic oxidation of organic pollutants. Chem Rev 2009;109:6541-69.
- [24] Suzuki Okada. TEA-induced long-term potentiation at hippocampal mossy fiber-CA3 synapses: Characteristics of its induction and expression. Brain Res 2009;1247:21–7.
- [25] Egea Martín-de-Saavedra, Parada Romero, Barrio Rosa, et al. Galantamine elicits neuroprotection by inhibiting iNOS, NADPH oxidase and ROS in hippocampal slices stressed with anoxia/reoxygenation. Neuropharmacology 2012;62:1082–90.
- [26] Gomes Bednarczyk, Gmurek Stelmachowski, Zaleska-Medynska Bastos, et al. Noble metal TiO₂ supported catalysts for the catalytic ozonation of parabens mixtures. Process Saf Environ Prot 2017;111:148–59.