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## TOXIC EFFECT OF CADMIUM ON FISH HEALTH

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### ABSTRACT

Increasing concentration of heavy metals in water bodies is posing serious threat to fish health and aquaculture. Several studies revealed that cadmium accumulates in the fish body tissues which causes significant toxic effects on fish health as well as possible toxic effect on human body. The toxic effects include release of reactive oxygen species (ROS), reduced activities of antioxidases and consequent tissue damage, renal and liver disfunction.

Keywords: fish health, aquaculture, toxic effects, heavy metals, liver disfunction

### INTRODUCTION

Heavy metal toxicity in water is the emerging global concern in developed as well as developing countries. A variety of contaminants including toxic heavy metals such as Cadmium, Copper, Mercury, Arsenic and Zinc are reported to be ubiquitously present in the waste water which are generally released into aquatic ecosystems and are toxic for aquatic organisms [1,2]. These heavy metals are mainly discharged from industries, sewage treatment plants and drainage from urban and agricultural areas [3]. Since heavy metals are not destroyed in living organisms through biological degradation, they have the ability to accumulate in various tissues and organs and even be biomagnified in the food chain [4]. When the amount of heavy metals in the medium reach to more than a certain limit it become toxic for those animals that live in that environment [5]. They pose serious hazards to freshwater fish resource for their toxicity and long persistence. They are also harmful to humans who rely on aquatic products as food sources. This element has a long-biological half-life in humans and it gets accumulated in vital organs-especially in liver and kidney throughout their lives [6]. The permissible levels for the concentration of Zn, Cd, Pb and Cu in water proposed by the United States Environmental Protection Agency are 5000, 5, 15 and 1300  $\mu\text{g/l}$  respectively [7]. However their concentration in aquatic organisms appear to be of several magnitudes higher than concentration present in the ecosystem [8]. This is attributed to bioaccumulation where by metal ions are taken up from the environment by the organism and accumulated in various organs and tissues and one such metal is cadmium which has been shown to accumulate in the various tissues of fish at higher concentration than appears in the environment. It is a non-essential element, with no known biological function and found in low concentration in natural water [9,10]. It can have severe toxic effects on aquatic organisms when present in excessive amounts [11], or even if present in extremely low concentrations [12]. Cadmium may enter into the atmosphere from zinc, lead or copper smelter [13]. Fertilizers often contain some cadmium. Burning of fossil fuels or incineration of municipal waste materials are known to be largest sources of cadmium release to the general environment such as coal or oil

[14].In its elemental form Cadmium does not break down but it can change form into different species and compounds. Some species can bind strongly to soil or sediment particles, depending primarily on the acidity of the surrounding water. In Sulfide ore bodies, cadmium is usually associated with sphalerite ,a zinc sulfide mineral .Fish living in metal polluted environment might either be exposed to the metals through food chain or via direct uptake from contaminated water. In the latter case, the gills are the first organs to suffer from this type of pollutants and show first clinical sign induced by water borne metal exposure[15]. The effect of the metals on the fish also depends on the size of the animal, hardness of test water, temperature and type of the animals that are exposed

#### Cadmium toxicity in fish

The toxicity of Cd in fishes vary from species to species [16]. The toxic effects may include both lethal and sublethal concentration which may change the growth rate, development, reproduction, histopathology, biochemistry, physiology and behavior [17]. Most of the total Cd in continental runoff is either retained in estuaries or deposited in deep-water ocean sediments.. Toxicity testing has been widely used as a tool to identify suitable organisms as a bio-indicator and to derive water quality standards for chemicals. It is also considered as an essential tool for assessing the effects and fate of toxicants in aquatic ecosystems [18].These tests are useful for rapid estimation of the concentration of the toxicants that cause direct irreversible harm to the test organism [19].cadmium damage the kidney and cause signs of chronic toxicity, including impaired kidney function, tumors ,hepatic dysfunction and poor reproduction rate which may lead to a gradual extinction of their generation[20,21]. Fish creates one of the major sources of protein for human beings and are major part of the human diet and it is therefore not surprising that numerous studies have been carried out on metal pollution in different species of edible fish[22,23, 24]

#### Toxic effect on gills

The toxic effect on gillsof fish include inflammation ,apoptosis and necrosis of gill tissue and the effect increases with the increase in exposure time[25,26,27].

#### Liver toxicity

Liver isis the main detoxifying organ in fish and convert heavy metals into less toxic forms which are the excreted out from the body [28]. A long time exposure increases cadmium content in the liver beyond its detoxifying capacity that leads to irreversible damage of the liver to various degree[28,29,30].significant increase have also been observed in serum GPT and GOT [31].

#### Toxic effect on immune system

Chronic exposure to cadmium mainly affects non specific immunity that include decrease in WBC count, decreased phagocytic activities of neutrophil and macrophages[32,33,34] .Cadmium exposure also inhibits the proliferation of lymphocyte in fish[35].

Table of lethal effects of cadmium on different fish species.

species	concentrtion	time	Effect	reference
<i>Rutilus frisii</i>	12.22 mg/L	96h	Median lethal	[36]
<i>Catla catla</i>	5.36 mg/L	96h	Median lethal	[37]
<i>Silurus meridionalis</i>	6.85 mg/L	96 h	Median lethal	[38]
<i>Gambusia holbroki</i>	37.2	96 h	Median lethal	[39]
<i>Rasbora sumatrana</i>	0.1mg/L	96 h	Median lethal	[40]
<i>Poecilia reticulata</i>	0.17mg/L	96 h	Median lethal	[40]
<i>Tautogolabrus adspersus</i>	26 µg /ml	96 h	Median lethal	[41]
<i>Morone saxatilis</i>	26 µg/ml	96 h	Median lethal	[41]
<i>Oreochromis niloticus</i>	14.8 mg/L	96 h	Median lethal	[42]
<i>Cyprinus carpio</i>	84.8 mg/L	96 h	Median lethal	[43]
<i>Clarias gariepinus</i>	10.85 mg /L	96 h	Median lethal	[44]
<i>Labeo rohita</i>	24 mg/L	96 h	Median lethal	[45]
<i>Tricogadter (colisa) fasciat</i>	49.5 mg/L	96 h	Median lethal	[46]
<i>Silurus soldatovi</i>	2.74 mg/L	96h	Median lethal	[47]
<i>Poecilia reticulata</i>	30.4 mg/L	96h	Median lethal	[48]
<i>Ophiocephalus striatus</i>	0.58 gn/L	96 h	Median lethal	[49]
<i>Scorpaena guttata</i>	25gm/L	96 h	Median lethal	[50]
<i>Uca rapax</i>	43 mg/L	96 h	Median lethal	[51]
<i>Mugil seheli</i>	5.36 mg/L	96 h	Median lethal	[52]
<i>Heteropneustis fossilis</i>	50.51 mg/L	96 h	Median lethal	[53]
<i>Oreochromis mossambiccus</i>	96.41 mg/L	96 h	Median lethal	[54]
<i>Arius arius</i>	56.4 mg/L	96 h	Median lethal	[55]
<i>Onchorhynchus mykiss</i>	8 µg /L	96 h	Embryonic mortality (97.5%)	[56]

The toxic effect of Cd on fish is mainly reflected in the oxidative stress caused by excessive accumulation of ROS that lead to structural changes in biological macromolecules, such as proteins and DNA, disorder of DNA replication and repair, and eventually pathological changes [47]. Cadmium also reduces the antioxidant activity of the cell by reducing the activity of antioxidant enzyme [57].

## EFFECTS OF CADMIUM ON HUMAN HEALTH BY INTAKE OF FISH

Unfortunately the chemical contaminants are stored within the lipid component of the fish so they are well protected when entering the human body. Wild fish from certain polluted areas may be highly contaminated. Metals such as cadmium, mercury, arsenic and lead are non-essential and therefore have toxic effects on living organisms [58, 559, 60]. These chemicals accumulate in the tissues of aquatic organisms at concentrations many times higher than concentrations in water and may be biomagnified in the food chain to levels that cause physiological impairment at higher trophic levels and in human consumers. Human take cadmium mainly through food. Foodstuffs that are rich in cadmium can greatly increase the cadmium concentration in human bodies. Examples are liver, mushrooms, shellfish, dried sea weed etc. Cadmium is first transported to the liver through the blood. There, it is bound to proteins to form complexes that are transported to the kidneys. Cadmium accumulates in kidneys, where it damages purifying mechanisms. This causes the excretion of crucial proteins and sugars from the body and further kidney damage. It takes a very long time before cadmium that as accumulated in kidneys is excreted from a human body.

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