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# Overview of the Chemcatcher<sup>®</sup> for the passive sampling of various pollutants in aquatic environments Part A: Principles, calibration, preparation and analysis of the sampler



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## ABSTRACT

The passive sampler Chemcatcher<sup>®</sup>, which was developed in 2000, can be adapted for various types of water contaminants (e.g., trace metals, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, pesticides and pharmaceutical residues) depending on the materials chosen for the receiving phase and the membrane. The Chemcatcher<sup>®</sup> has been used in numerous research articles in both laboratory experiments and field exposures, and here we review the state-of-the-art in applying this passive sampler. Part A of this review covers (1) the theory upon which the sampler is based (*i.e.*, brief theory, calculation of water concentration, Performance and Reference Compounds), (2) the preparation of the device (*i.e.*, sampler design, choice of the membrane and disk, mounting of the tool), and (3) calibration procedures (*i.e.*, design of the calibration tank, tested parameters, sampling rates).

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**Abbreviations:** AMPA, AminoMethylPhosphonic Acid; CA, Cellulose Acetate; DGT, Diffusive Gradient in Thin films; GC, Gas Chromatography; HPLC, High Performance Liquid Chromatography; ICP-MS, Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry; LA-ICP-MS, Laser Ablation Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry; LDPE, Low Density Polyethylene; MESCO, Membrane-Enclosed Sorptive Coating; MS, Mass Spectrometry; PAH, Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons; PBDE, PolyBromoDiphenylEthers; PC, Poly Carbonate; PCB, PolyChloroBiphenyls; PDB, Polyethylene Diffusion Bag; PE, PolyEthylene; PES, PolyEtherSulfone; POCIS, Polar Organic Chemical Integrative Sampler; POM, PolyOxyMethylene; PRC, Performance Reference Compound; PS, PolySulfone; PTFE, PolyTetraFluoroEthylene; PVC, PolyVinylChloride; PVDF, PolyVinylideneFluoride;  $R_s$ , Sampling Rate; SDB-RPS, polyStyreneDivinylBenzene-Reverse Phase Sulfonated; SDB-XC, polyStyreneDivinylBenzene-exchange; ToF, Time of Flight; SPMD, Semi-Permeable Membrane Device; TWAC, Time Weighted Average Concentration; UPW, Ultra-Pure Water

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## 1. Introduction

Water quality monitoring needs more efficient techniques in order to evaluate environmental pollution from various types of contaminants. Analytical progress has been made in the sensitive determination of both organic and inorganic trace contaminants in environmental matrices, but one of the major limiting factors remains the sampling step. Indeed, spot sampling is the cheapest and most commonly encountered sampling methodology but there are some limitations, in particular regarding its representativeness [1,2]. Moreover, short-term pollution events (e.g.: run off events or accidental pollution) may be missed and large volumes of water are required for the study of trace level contaminated sites.

Both inorganic and organic groups of contaminants can be sampled by passive sampling. Inorganic pollutants can be sampled by DGT (Diffusive Gradient in Thin film) or Chemcatcher® [3]. For organic pollutants, several passive sampler designs have been developed: POCIS (Polar Organic Chemical Integrative Sampler), SPMD (Semi-Permeable Membrane Device), MESCO (Membrane-Enclosed Sorptive Coating), Chemcatcher® and others [3–6].

Briefly, contaminants accumulate in a receiving phase, by diffusion followed by sorption, with an integrative step before equilibrium is reached. Passive samplers can be used during the integrative accumulation phase or at equilibrium [7]. POCIS, DGT, Chemcatcher® and SPMD are for instance commonly applied in the integrative accumulation phase in order to calculate time weighted average concentrations (TWACs) of pollutants [7,8]. Passive Diffusion Bag Samplers (PDBSs), polyoxymethylene (POM) [9–11] and also POCIS or Chemcatcher®, with longer deployment periods, can be used at equilibrium.

This review focuses on the passive sampler Chemcatcher®, which has the particularity of being adapted to organic, organo-metallic and inorganic contaminants depending on the receiving phase and membrane. The first application of this sampler was reported by Kingston et al. [3] for organic contaminants (Fig 1). One year later, the first application for inorganic contaminants with a chelating disk was developed by Bjorklund Persson et al. [12]. Two patents were published; the first in 2004 in the United Kingdom by Kingston et al. [13] and the second in 2006 in the United States [14]. The name Chemcatcher® appears only in 2007 when the trademark was deposited. Since, this tool has been

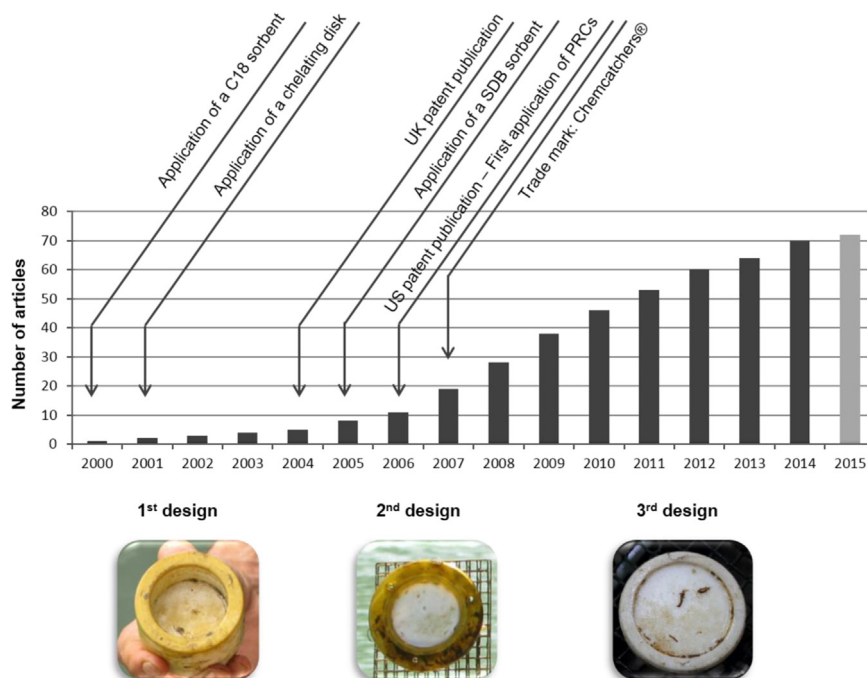


Fig. 1. Main steps and publication history for the development and uses of the Chemcatcher®.

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