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# Efficient purification and concentration of viruses from a large body of high turbidity seawater

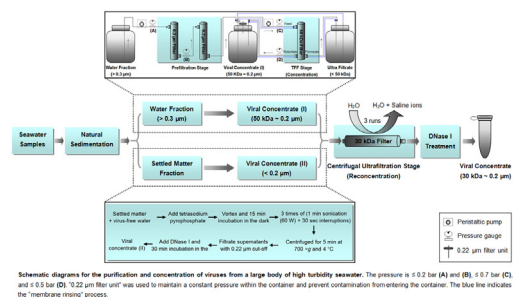
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## GRAPHICAL ABSTRACT



## ABSTRACT

Marine viruses are the most abundant entities in the ocean and play crucial roles in the marine ecological system. However, understanding of viral diversity on large scale depends on efficient and reliable viral purification and concentration techniques. Here, we report on developing an efficient method to purify and concentrate viruses from large body of high turbidity seawater. The developed method characterizes with high viral recovery efficiency, high concentration factor, high viral particle densities and high-throughput, and is reliable for viral concentration from high turbidity seawater. Recovered viral particles were used directly for subsequent analysis

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by epifluorescence microscopy, transmission electron microscopy and metagenomic sequencing. Three points are essential for this method:

- The sampled seawater (>150L) was initially divided into two parts, water fraction and settled matter fraction, after natural sedimentation.
- Both viruses in the water fraction concentrated by tangential flow filtration (TFF) and viruses isolated from the settled matter fraction were considered as the whole viral community in high turbidity seawater.
- The viral concentrates were re-concentrated by using centrifugal filter device in order to obtain high density of viral particles.

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### Method details

#### *Sample preparation*

More than 300L of subsurface water (2m depth), characterized by highly suspended matter contents (approximately  $3.4\text{ g L}^{-1}$  (wet weight)), was sampled from Yangshan Deep-Water Port, South East Shanghai, China. Among them, 500 mL was fixed *in situ* by adding  $0.02\ \mu\text{m}$  filtered formalin (37–40% (w/v) formaldehyde solution) (Sangon, Shanghai, China) to 2% (v/v) final concentration for enumeration of viruses in the original water sample. The collected water samples were kept on ice and delivered to the laboratory as quickly as possible after finishing sampling.

#### *Enumeration of viruses in original seawater sample*

In order to assess the recovery efficiency of the method established in this study for purification and concentration of marine viruses from high turbidity seawater, viral particles in the original seawater samples (Table 1 and Fig. 1A) were initially determined by epifluorescence microscopy after SYBR Green I staining according to the procedure described in [1,2]. All enumeration of viral particles in this study was performed by using the identical protocols.

#### *Concentration of viruses from the high turbidity seawater*

The procedures for purification and concentration of virus particles from water samples are outlined in Graphical Abstract. The major procedures are as followed:

1. *Sedimentation by natural gravity.* 150L of seawater samples were maintained in the dark for 12 h at  $4^\circ\text{C}$ . After sedimentation, the samples were divided into two parts: water and settled matter fractions. The water fraction (approximately 150L) was subsequently subjected to viral concentration, and the settled matter (approximately 509.8 g) was stored at  $-80^\circ\text{C}$  before viruses were isolated and concentrated.
2. *Removal of all particles or cells larger than  $0.2\ \mu\text{m}$ .* The water fraction (approximately 150L) was successively filtered through  $0.3$  and  $0.2\ \mu\text{m}$  pore-sized filters in a stainless steel filter holder, a high performance and throughput filtration system (Millipore, MA, USA) equipped with the reusable cartridge filter with a large surface area, under a low entry pressure ( $<0.2\text{ bar}$ ) driven by a peristaltic pump (Millipore, MA, USA). Afterwards, the “viral fraction” seawater (the filtrate, approximately 150L) was obtained. The number of viral particles in the filtrate (Table 1 and Fig. 1B) was determined by epifluorescence microscopy after SYBR Green I staining.
3. *TFF concentration.* The “viral fraction” seawater (approximately 150L) was subsequently concentrated by using a large-scale TFF system with 50kDa cut-off tangential flow filter (Millipore, MA, USA) (see Graphical Abstract). The intake pressure driven by the peristaltic pump was below 10p.s.i. (approximately 0.7 bar) to protect viruses from being destroyed, resulting in loss of virus

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