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Estimating removals of contaminants of emerging concern from wastewater treatment plants: The critical role of wastewater hydrodynamics

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- 1 Estimating removals of contaminants of emerging concern from
- 2 wastewater treatment plants: The critical role of wastewater
- 3 hydrodynamics
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Abstract

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- 9 Accurate data are needed to evaluate the capacity of wastewater treatments plants (WWTPs)
- 10 to remove contaminants of emerging concern (CECs). The variability of CEC removals
- 11 reported in the literature has raised questions about the methods used to estimate removals. In
- this study, we used the recently proposed "fractionated approach" to account for the influence
- 13 of hydrodynamics in WWTPs and applied this method for estimating removals of 23 target
- 14 CECs. Data on the conductivity and temperature of wastewater at two WWTPs were used to
- 15 determine the hydraulic model that best described the flow regime of treatment units.
- 16 Composite samples (24-h) were collected at different stages of treatment over successive
- days. The concentrations of the target compounds in wastewater were determined by liquid
- 18 chromatography with mass spectrometry. Different hydraulic models were necessary to
- define the hydrodynamics at the two WWTPs, resulting in different load fractions to be used
- 20 in calculations of removals. For WWTP A, that has a primary clarifier, all target CECs,
- 21 except triclosan, were poorly removed during this step at efficiencies <30%. On the other
- 22 hand, the activated sludge treatment unit at both WWTPs removed most target CECs at
- 23 >70%. This study expanded the application of the fractionated approach to compare the
- 24 hydraulics of two treatment trains of different configurations, including primary and
- 25 secondary treatment. It demonstrated the sensitivity of the method to account for variations
- 26 between the different treatment units. Reliable removals of an extended list of CECs in
- 27 primary and secondary treatment were also provided in this study.

28

- 29 Keywords: Micropollutants, Fractionated approach, Hydraulic model, Removal efficiency, Activated sludge,
- 30 Primary clarification

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