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# **ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT**

### The self-catalysis of ferrate (VI) by its reactive byproducts or reductive substances for

### the degradation of diclofenac: kinetics, mechanism and transformation products

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# **Graphical Abstract:**



#### **Reaction pathways:**

- 1. hydroxylation
- 2. decarboxylation
- 3. C-N bond cleavage
- 4. dehydrogenation
- 5. formylation
- 6. dechlorination-hydroxylation

## Highlights

- ▶ Higher DCF removal by Fe(VI) was observed in NaOH system than in phosphate buffer.
- ▶ Fe(III) and Fe(II) improved the self-catalysis of Fe(VI) by electron or O transfer.

Reductive substances (e.g.,  $Mn^{2+}$  and  $SO_3^{2-}$ ) enhanced the decomposition of Fe(VI).

Six transformation pathways were proposed based on the identified seven byproducts.

**Abstract:** In this study, the effect of phosphate, Fe(III), Fe(II), and reductive substances (i.e.,  $Mn^{2+}$  and  $SO_3^{2-}$ ) on diclofenac (DCF) oxidation and its degradation mechanism by Ferrate (Fe(VI)) were investigated. The removal rate of DCF in reaction solution at pH 9.0 adjusted by NaOH (67.36%) was higher than that by phosphate buffer (14.87%) because of the complexation of phosphate with Fe(III) and/or Fe(II) restraining the self-catalysis of Fe(VI). Fe(III) or Fe(II) could significantly catalyze Fe(VI) to generate more intermediates (i.e., Fe(V) and Fe(IV)), whose oxidation capacity was magnitude stronger

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