

This is the accepted manuscript version of the contribution published as:

Hebert, A., Feliars, C., Lecarpentier, C., Neale, P.A., **Schlichting, R.**, Thibert, S., **Escher, B.I.** (2018):

Bioanalytical assessment of adaptive stress responses in drinking water: A predictive tool to differentiate between micropollutants and disinfection by-products

Water Res. **132**, 340 – 349

The publisher's version is available at:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.watres.2017.12.078>

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Bioanalytical Assessment of Adaptive Stress Responses in Drinking Water: A Predictive Tool to Differentiate between Micropollutants and Disinfection By-Products

Armelle Hebert^a, Cedric Feliers^b, Caroline Lecarpentier^b, Peta A. Neale^c, Rita Schlichting^d,
Sylvie Thibert^e, Beate I. Escher^{c,d,f*}

^aVeolia Research & Innovation, 78600 Maisons-Laffitte, France

^bVeolia Eau d'Ile de France, Le Vermont, 28 Boulevard de Pesaro, TSA 31197, 92739 Nanterre
France

^cAustralian Rivers Institute, Griffith School of Environment, Griffith University, Southport QLD
4222, Australia

^dUFZ – Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research, 04318 Leipzig, Germany

^eSyndicat des Eaux D'Ile-de-France (SEDIF), 14 Rue Saint-Benoît, 75006 Paris, France

^fEberhard Karls University Tübingen, Environmental Toxicology, Center for Applied Geosciences,
72074 Tübingen, Germany

*corresponding author: beate.escher@ufz.de; Ph: +49 341 235 1244

27 **Abstract**

28 Drinking water can contain low levels of micropollutants, as well as disinfection by-products
29 (DBPs) that form from the reaction of disinfectants with organic and inorganic matter in water. Due
30 to the complex mixture of trace chemicals in drinking water, targeted chemical analysis alone is not
31 sufficient for monitoring. The current study aimed to apply *in vitro* bioassays indicative of adaptive
32 stress responses to monitor the toxicological profiles and the formation of DBPs in drinking water.
33 Water samples from three drinking water distribution networks in France were tested with bioassays
34 indicative of the Nrf2-mediated oxidative stress response, the p53-mediated response to
35 genotoxicity and the NF-κB-mediated response to inflammation. Bioanalysis was complemented
36 with chemical analysis of forty DBPs. All water samples were active in the oxidative stress
37 response assay, but only after considerable sample enrichment, while no effects were detected in the
38 p53 assay and few samples showed low activity in the NF-κB assay. As both micropollutants in
39 source water and DBPs formed during treatment can contribute to the effect, the bioanalytical
40 equivalent concentration (BEQ) approach was applied for the first time to determine the
41 contribution of DBPs, with DBPs found to contribute between 17 to 58% of the oxidative stress
42 response. Further, the BEQ approach was also used to assess the contribution of volatile DBPs to
43 the observed effect, with volatile DBPs found to have only a minor contribution as compared to the
44 measured effects of the non-volatile chemicals enriched by solid-phase extraction. The observed
45 effects in the distribution networks were below any level of concern, quantifiable only at high
46 enrichment and not different from bottled mineral water. Integrating bioanalytical tools and the
47 BEQ mixture model for monitoring drinking water quality is an additional assurance that chemical
48 monitoring is not overlooking any unknown chemicals or transformation products and can help to
49 ensure chemically safe drinking water.

50

51 **Keywords:** bioassay; disinfection by-product; drinking water; oxidative stress, micropollutants

52 **1. Introduction**

53 Access to chemically and microbiologically safe drinking water is essential for human health. In
54 recent years, micropollutants, such as pharmaceuticals, perfluorinated compounds and pesticides,
55 have been detected at very low levels in both source water and treated drinking water (Loos et al.
56 2007, Mompelat et al. 2011, Glassmeyer et al. 2017). As microbial contamination is a more acute
57 concern, drinking water is commonly treated with disinfectants, such as chlorine, chloramine and
58 chlorine dioxide, to inactivate waterborne pathogens (Fawell and Nieuwenhuijsen 2003, WHO 2011).
59 However, common disinfectants can react with natural organic and inorganic matter in water to
60 form disinfection by-products (DBPs), with DBPs associated with chronic adverse health outcomes,
61 including bladder cancer (Villanueva et al. 2007). Residual disinfectants, such as chlorine, may also
62 react further within the distribution network, both by further reactions with dissolved natural
63 organic matter and with biofilms present in the pipes (Rossman et al. 2001, Rodriguez et al. 2004).
64 In addition to being highly influenced by the type and concentration of organic and inorganic matter
65 in the source water, the different species and concentrations of DBPs vary according to the type of
66 disinfectant used, the disinfectant dose, the time since dosing (i.e., water age), temperature and pH
67 of the water (Zhang et al. 2000, Hua and Reckhow 2008, Richardson and Postigo 2015).
68 Disinfectants can also react with micropollutants present in source water, forming transformation
69 products (Postigo and Richardson 2014). Consequently, a complex mixture of DBPs,
70 micropollutants and their transformation products may potentially be present in drinking water.

71 To date, drinking water monitoring has focused on chemical analysis, but targeted chemical
72 analysis alone is not sufficient given that chemicals are likely to be present in drinking water in
73 mixtures at low concentrations. *In vitro* bioassays can be applied in parallel to chemical analysis to
74 assess the effect of all active (known and unknown) chemicals in a water sample (Escher and
75 Leusch 2012). Despite the fact that chemicals will potentially be present at very low levels, the
76 additive effects of the chemical mixture may still be detected by bioassays (Silva et al. 2002).
77 Previous studies have typically shown no or negligible effects in drinking water using assays

78 indicative of specific effects, such as activation of the estrogen receptor and activation of the
79 androgen receptor (Brand et al. 2013, Escher et al. 2014). In contrast, bioassays indicative of
80 adaptive stress responses, such as oxidative stress, have been shown to be suitable for the
81 assessment of drinking water (Neale et al. 2012, Farré et al. 2013, Wang et al. 2013).

82 Adaptive stress responses are well conserved pathways that help restore the cell to
83 homeostasis after damage by stressors (Simmons et al. 2009). Adaptive stress responses tend to be
84 induced at lower concentrations than cell death, meaning that adaptive stress response assays can
85 act as sensitive monitoring tools. In this study, we applied bioassays indicative of the Nrf2-mediated
86 oxidative stress response, the p53-mediated response to genotoxicity and the NF- κ B-mediated
87 response to inflammation. Electrophilic chemicals and chemicals that produce reactive oxygen
88 species can induce the oxidative stress response as the presence of these chemicals releases
89 transcription factor Nrf2 from negative regulator Keap1, which in turn activates the antioxidant
90 response element (Zhang 2006). Environmental water samples (Escher et al. 2012), micropollutants
91 (Martin et al. 2010, Escher et al. 2013) and DBPs (Stalter et al. 2016a) have been shown to activate
92 the oxidative stress response, with 23% of analysed chemicals in the US EPA ToxCast database
93 reported to induce oxidative stress (US EPA 2015). The p53 transcription factor responds to DNA
94 damage and will initiate repair proteins, alter the cell cycle or induce apoptosis (Knight et al. 2009).
95 The p53 response assay can detect genotoxic compounds and has previously been applied to
96 individual DBPs (Stalter et al. 2016a) and water samples (Yeh et al. 2014, Neale et al. 2015a). NF-
97 κ B is an important transcription factor associated with the inflammation response, as well as cell
98 growth and apoptosis (Simmons et al. 2009). Certain pharmaceuticals have been shown to inhibit
99 the NF- κ B pathway (Miller et al. 2010), but the application of assays indicative of the NF- κ B
100 response for water quality monitoring has been limited to date, though there has been some
101 promising results for surface water (Neale et al. 2015a).

102 In this study, bioassays indicative of adaptive stress responses were applied to monitor the
103 toxicological profile and assess DBP formation in three drinking water distribution networks in

104 France. A preliminary screening study of the three distribution networks found no effect in assays
105 indicative of hormonal activity, including both activation and inhibition of the androgen receptor,
106 the estrogen receptor, the progesterone receptor and the glucocorticoid receptor, and activation of
107 the thyroid receptor beta and the peroxisome proliferator-activated receptor alpha (Besselink 2013).
108 The studied distribution networks were fed by three water treatment plants (WTPs) treating surface
109 water from three different rivers, respectively, and utilizing either conventional treatment or a
110 combination of nanofiltration and conventional treatment (70% and 30% of flow, respectively).
111 Water samples were collected after treatment and at different water ages throughout the three
112 distribution networks, with sampling taking place four times over different seasons.

113 Given that chemicals will be present in mixtures in the water samples, the mixture toxicity
114 model of concentration addition was applied for the apportionment of effects between DBPs and
115 micropollutants and to predict the effects of volatile DBPs using the bioanalytical equivalent
116 concentration (BEQ) approach. This is appropriate as it has previously been shown that mixtures of
117 chemicals act in a concentration additive manner in the oxidative stress response assay (Escher et al.
118 2013). Further, the BEQ approach has recently been applied to assess the contribution of detected
119 chemicals to the biological effect in surface water and wastewater (Neale et al. 2015a, Neale et al.
120 2017). As water in distribution networks may contain both micropollutants from the source water
121 and formed DBPs, bioanalytical equivalent concentrations from bioanalysis (BEQ_{bio}) were
122 compared before and after chlorination to predict the contribution of DBPs to the biological effect.
123 The BEQ concept was also applied to determine the contribution of volatile DBPs. As volatile
124 DBPs are not captured by typical sample enrichment processes used for bioanalysis and the effects
125 in the volatile fraction are typically well explained by the known volatile DBPs (Stalter et al.
126 2016b), forty non-volatile and volatile DBPs including haloacetic acids (HAA), haloacetonitriles
127 (HAN) and trihalomethanes (THM) were quantified by gas chromatography with electron capture
128 detector (GC-ECD) and gas chromatography with mass spectrometry (GC-MS). Using the detected
129 concentrations and the relative effect potency of the individual DBPs in the assays, bioanalytical

130 equivalent concentrations from detected chemical concentrations (BEQ_{chem}) were calculated for
131 volatile and non-volatile DBPs, which were then compared to BEQ_{bio} .

132

133 **2. Materials and Methods**

134 *2.1. Water treatment plants*

135 Three WTPs, Méry-sur-Oise, Choisy-le-Roi and Neuilly-sur-Marne, in the Paris metropolitan area
136 were included in the current study (Table 1). Méry-sur-Oise WTP, which produces 150,000 m³/day,
137 uses a combination of nanofiltration treatment processes (70%) and conventional treatment
138 processes (clarification, sand filtration, ozonation, granular activated carbon (GAC) filtration and
139 chlorine disinfection) (30%) to treat water from the Oise River, with the treated water from these
140 two processes being mixed before final chlorination and distribution. Choisy-le-Roi WTP, which
141 produces 320,000 m³/day from the Seine River, applies complete conventional treatment including
142 pre-ozonation, clarification, sand filtration, ozonation, GAC filtration, UV and final chlorine
143 disinfection. Neuilly-sur-Marne WTP also applies the same treatment processes, with the exception
144 of pre-ozonation, and produces approximately 300,000 m³/day from the Marne River.

145

146 *2.2. Chemical analysis*

147 Forty DBPs, including nitrosamines, HAAs, HANs, haloketones (HK) and THMs, were analysed in
148 the current study. HAAs and HANs were quantified using GC-ECD based on the standard methods
149 NF EN ISO 23631 (2006) and EPA 551.1 (Munch and Hautman 1995), respectively, while the
150 THMs were analysed using purge & trap GC-MS based on the standard method NF EN ISO 15680
151 (2003). Nitrosamines were analysed using liquid chromatography-tandem mass spectrometry (LC-
152 MS/MS) and HKs were analysed using GC-MS. The properties of the studied chemicals are shown
153 in Table S1 of the Supplementary Information (SI).

154

155 *2.3. Sample collection and enrichment for bioanalysis*

156 Water samples were collected from the outlet of the WTPs and at different points along the
157 distribution network in November 2015 and March, May and September 2016 (Table 1), with
158 duplicate samples collected at most sampling points. Water quality parameters for the treated water,
159 including temperature, total organic carbon (TOC), pH and residual free chlorine, are provided in
160 Tables S2 and S3 of the SI. Immediately after sampling, 20 mg/L thiosulfate was added to
161 neutralise the free chlorine. Water samples were also collected from Choisy-le-Roi and Neuilly-sur-
162 Marne WTPs prior to chlorination. Evian water with and without 20 mg/L thiosulfate was used as
163 controls. Two litres of water were enriched per sample using 500 mg Oasis HLB solid phase
164 extraction (SPE) cartridges without pH adjustment. After drying, the cartridges were eluted using
165 20 mL of methanol followed by 20 mL of methyl tert-butyl ether (MTBE). The extracts were blown
166 to dryness and resolubilised in 1 mL of methanol, giving an enrichment factor of 2000 in the final
167 extract.

168

169 *2.4. Bioanalysis*

170 The water extracts were assessed in three assays indicative of adaptive stress responses for
171 oxidative stress (AREc32), p53 response (p53RE-*bla*) and NF-κB response (NF-κB-*bla*). The
172 studied assays are summarised in Table 2. All sample extracts were blown down to dryness and
173 resolubilised in assay media prior to bioanalysis, with blown down solvent controls also included to
174 ensure there was no effect from the solvent. In addition, Evian water controls with and without
175 thiosulfate were also tested in the assays. Initially, all samples were run in a 12-step serial dilution
176 series as a range finder, with active samples repeated twice independently in a 12-step linear
177 dilution series (see Supplementary Information for more details and all dilution series).

178 The AREc32 assay, a reporter gene assay based on the MCF7 breast cancer cell line (Wang
179 et al. 2006), was conducted as described by Escher et al. (2012) with some modifications. Briefly,
180 10 µL of extract serially diluted in DMEM with 10% fetal bovine serum (FBS) were added to a 384
181 well plate containing 30 µL of cells with a density of 8.33×10^4 cells/mL. The plate was incubated

182 for 23 h at 37°C, 5% CO₂. Cell viability was assessed using PrestoBlue, with fluorescence measured
183 after 1 h incubation at 37°C, followed by determining luciferase production by measuring
184 luminescence. tert-Butylhydroquinone (tBHQ) served as the positive reference compound.

185 The CellSensor p53RE-bla assay (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, US) uses the HCT-116 human colon
186 cells, with the assay performed according to Neale et al. (2015b) with some modifications. Briefly,
187 10 µL of extract serially diluted in Opti-MEM with 2% charcoal-dextran treated FBS were added to
188 a 384 well plate containing 30 µL of cells with a density of 1.33×10^5 cells/mL. The samples were
189 incubated for 48 h, with induction of p53 and cell viability measured in parallel using the
190 ToxBLAzer FRET-B/G CCG4-AM substrate. The positive reference compound was mitomycin.

191 The CellSensor NF-κB-bla assay (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, US) is based on the human
192 monocytic THP-1 cell line, with the assay conducted based on König et al. (2017). Briefly, 10 µL of
193 extract serially diluted in Opti-MEM with 2% charcoal-dextran treated FBS were added to a 384
194 well plate with 30 µL of THP-1 cells with a density of 6.67×10^5 cells/mL. The samples were
195 incubated for 22 h at 37°C, with induction and cell viability measured simultaneously using the
196 ToxBLAzer FRET-B/G CCG4-AM substrate. The positive reference compound was tumour
197 necrosis factor alpha (TNFα). The concentration-effect curves for the three reference compounds
198 are provided in the SI, Figure S1.

199

200 2.5. Data evaluation

201 Activation of the transcription factors in the assay was expressed as an induction ratio (IR), which
202 was calculated using the signal of the sample and the signal of the unexposed cells (control;
203 Equation 1). Linear concentration-effect curves up to an IR of 5 (e.g. Figure S1) were applied to
204 determine the effect concentration causing an induction ratio of 1.5 ($EC_{IR1.5}$) (Equation 2). This
205 indicates a 50% increase in IR compared to the unexposed cells (IR =1) and Escher et al. (2012)
206 demonstrated that an IR of 1.5 was consistently higher than the limit of reporting (three times the

207 standard deviation of the controls), indicating that $EC_{IR1.5}$ is a sensitive benchmark value. All
208 duplicate samples were combined for data analysis.

209

210

211 (1)

212

213

214 (2)

215

216 Cell viability, which was measured in parallel to induction, was determined with Equation 3 using a
217 log-sigmoidal concentration-effect curve. The adjustable parameters include slope and the
218 inhibitory concentration causing 50% reduction in cell viability (IC_{50}). As full concentration-effect
219 curves were often not obtained, the concentration causing 10% effect (IC_{10}) was calculated using
220 Equation 4. Further information about data evaluation can be found in Escher et al. (2014).

221

222

223 (3)

224

225

226 (4)

227

228 The $EC_{IR1.5}$ and the IC_{10} values were expressed in units of relative enrichment factor (REF), which is
229 calculated based on the sample enrichment factor by SPE and the assay dilution factor (Escher and
230 Leusch 2012). The maximum REF for the p53RE-*bla* and NF- κ B-*bla* assays was 500, while a
231 maximum REF of 200 was used for the AREc32 assay. Note that this is a far higher enrichment

232 than typically used for bioanalytical testing and was necessary due to the low levels of effects
233 observed.

234 Sample $EC_{IR1.5}$ values were converted to BEQ_{bio} using Equation 5 using the $EC_{IR1.5}$ of the
235 assay reference compound.

236

237

238 (5)

239

240 BEQ_{chem} was used to determine the effect of the detected DBPs. Firstly, $EC_{IR1.5}$ values for the
241 detected chemicals i were collected from Stalter et al. (2016a) (SI, Table S1), with relative effect
242 potency (REP_i) calculated using Equation 6 and the assay reference compounds and their $EC_{IR1.5}$
243 given in Table 2. The detected concentration in molar units (C_i) and REP_i (SI, Table S1) were used
244 to calculate the BEQ_{chem} (Equation 7).

245

246

247 (6)

248

249 (7)

250

251 Chemicals with a Henry's Law Constant less than 1.00×10^{-6} atm m³/mol were used to calculate
252 $BEQ_{\text{chem, non-volatile}}$, while chemicals with a Henry's Law Constant greater than 1.00×10^{-6} atm m³/mol
253 were used to calculate $BEQ_{\text{chem, volatile}}$, with the Henry's Law Constant cut-off for volatile compounds
254 adopted from Stalter et al. (2016a).

255

256 **3. Results and Discussion**

257 *3.1. Chemical analysis*

258 The detected concentrations of DBPs at each sampling site over the four sampling campaigns are
259 provided in Tables S4 to S7, with the sum molar concentration of detected DBPs for each chemical
260 class shown in Figure 1. Samples from the Méry-sur-Oise distribution network had the lowest DBP
261 concentrations, which can be attributed to the low concentrations of TOC in the water (0.38 to 0.74
262 mg/L) after treatment with a combination of nanofiltration and conventional treatment processes
263 (Table S2). Choisy-le-Roi and Neuilly-sur-Marne, which both use conventional treatment without
264 membrane filtration, had TOC concentrations generally over 1 mg/L, with the highest TOC
265 concentrations of 1.60 and 1.65 mg/L, respectively, in May, which correlated with increased DBP
266 concentrations in the distribution networks.

267 THMs, including bromoform, chloroform, dibromochloromethane and
268 bromochloromethane, were the dominant type of DBP formed after disinfection for all distribution
269 networks, though the sum THM concentrations were significantly lower than the parameter value of
270 100 µg/L in the European Union Drinking Water Directive (European Commission 1998). DBP
271 concentrations generally increased with water age in the distribution network, with the
272 concentration noticeably increasing after re-chlorination in May (refer to Table 1 for re-chlorination
273 information). Increasing DBP formation along the distribution network has been observed
274 previously (e.g. Rodriguez et al. 2004, Dominguez-Tello et al. 2015), with greater DBP formation
275 attributed to the longer contact time between the disinfectant and organic and inorganic matter in

276 water. Overall, chemical analysis reveals generally low DBP concentrations, which can be
277 attributed to the low TOC concentration in the treated water.

278

279 3.2. Bioanalysis

280 The $EC_{IR1.5}$ and IC_{10} values for the AREc32, p53RE-*bla* and NF- κ B-*bla* assays are provided in
281 Tables S8 to S10, with concentration-effect curves for cytotoxicity and induction provided in
282 Figures S2 to S7. AREc32 was the most responsive assay, with all samples showing an effect, but
283 only after at least 15 times enrichment of the water sample. The Evian water samples with and
284 without thiosulfate also induced a response in the AREc32 assay, but only at very high enrichment
285 (REF 56-100). No cytotoxicity was observed at the active concentrations. Water samples from the
286 Méry-sur-Oise distribution network had the lowest effects in all sampling campaigns, which fits
287 with the lower DBP and TOC concentrations (Figure 1). An increased effect was observed in
288 samples from May and September compared to November and March for all distribution networks.
289 While the increased effect in May fits well with increased TOC and detected DBPs, the TOC and
290 DBP concentrations in September were similar to concentrations in November and March.
291 Temperature is a factor in DBP formation (Rodriquez et al. 2004, Hua and Reckhow 2008), thus
292 higher levels of some DBPs may be expected in September compared to November and March due
293 to the increased temperature (Tables S2 and S3). However, this was not observed for the targeted
294 DBPs. Different sample preparation methods were used for chemical analysis and bioanalysis, with
295 sample enrichment for bioanalysis mainly extracting non-volatile and semi-volatile DBPs, while
296 chemical analysis mostly targeted volatile DBPs (Stalter et al. 2016b). Therefore, formation of
297 undetected non-volatile or semi-volatile DBPs may explain the increased effect in September.
298 Alternatively, the increase in observed effect may be related to other existing micropollutants in the
299 source water. The contribution of micropollutants and DBPs to the oxidative stress response will be
300 explored further below.

301 Cytotoxicity masked induction for all samples in the p53RE-*bla* assay, thus $EC_{IR1.5}$ values
302 could not be derived for this assay. This has also been observed for other water types, including
303 wastewater and surface water (Escher et al. 2014, Neale et al. 2017). While both individual DBPs
304 (Stalter et al. 2016a) and highly chlorinated pool water (Yeh et al. 2014) have been shown to induce
305 the p53 response, the window between cytotoxicity and induction was small. Consequently, the lack
306 of p53 response in the current study supports the high quality of the treated water.

307 Similar to the p53RE-*bla*, cytotoxicity often masked induction in the NF- κ B-*bla* assay.
308 Induction was often highest before chlorination in the Choisy-le-Roi WTP (November and
309 September) and the Neuilly-sur-Marne WTP (November), which suggests that the effect was not
310 due to DBP formation during chlorination, but to other micropollutants in the water. This is
311 consistent with the observation that known DBPs are not active in this assay (Stalter et al. 2016a).
312 The NF- κ B-*bla* assay has only recently been applied for water quality monitoring and it is still
313 unclear which environmental chemicals induce a response in this assay (Neale et al. 2015a, Neale et
314 al. 2017).

315 Overall, bioanalysis indicates low effects in the treated water in the studied distribution
316 networks. As all samples were active in the AREc32 assay, the following discussion will primarily
317 focus on the oxidative stress response.

318

319 *3.3. Which chemical mixtures can be assessed by the oxidative stress response?*

320 Bioassays alone cannot provide information about the effect of individual chemicals in a sample,
321 but rather the effects of all chemicals in a sample. As indicated by the ToxCast database (US EPA
322 2015), a wide variety of chemicals, including both micropollutants and DBPs, may activate the
323 oxidative stress response. In the current study, the contribution of DBPs to the oxidative stress
324 response in the Choisy-le-Roi and Neuilly-sur-Marne networks was estimated by considering the
325 effect before and after chlorination using the BEQ approach. No sample before chlorination was
326 measured at the Méry-sur-Oise WTP. The $EC_{IR1.5}$ values were translated to BEQ_{bio} , which relates the

327 effect in a sample to the concentration of a reference compound, e.g. tBHQ, which would elicit the
328 same effect as the sample. $BEQ_{bio,DBP}$ was calculated using Equation 8 assuming additive effects of
329 micropollutants and DBPs.

330

331

332 (8)

333

334 Figure 2 shows that DBPs contributed up to 58% of the oxidative stress burden. DBPs tended to
335 contribute more to the oxidative stress response in the Choisy-le-Roi distribution network, with
336 $BEQ_{bio,DBP}$ typically increasing with longer water ages in the distribution network. In contrast, other
337 micropollutants had a greater contribution to the biological effect in the Neuilly-sur-Marne
338 distribution network. Boucherie et al. (2010) previously showed that the treatment processes at the
339 Neuilly-sur-Marne WTP were effective at removing a range of pharmaceuticals and pesticides. The
340 observed difference may be related to the differences in treatment processes between the two
341 WTPs, with pre-ozonation applied only at the Choisy-le-Roi WTP, as well as the varying natural
342 organic matter properties in the raw waters. Overall, comparing effect before and after chlorination
343 indicates that DBPs did not contribute substantially to the observed effects. It should be noted that it
344 was not possible to calculate $BEQ_{bio,DBP}$ for the Choisy-le-Roi distribution network in May as a
345 sample was not collected before disinfection, while the effect before chlorination was higher than
346 after chlorination at Neuilly-sur-Marne in November, so this sampling date was also excluded.

347 In addition to reacting with natural organic matter, disinfectants may react with
348 micropollutants to form transformation products, which may be more or less toxic than their parent
349 compound (Postigo and Richardson 2014). The applied BEQ approach cannot differentiate between

350 the effect of DBPs formed from natural organic matter and micropollutant transformation products;
351 however, the contribution of transformation products is expected to be small and the chlorinated
352 transformation products can be considered as DBPs.

353 Previous studies have shown that disinfection of source waters results in an increased
354 oxidative stress response, which also corresponded with increased DBP concentrations (Neale et al.
355 2012, Farré et al. 2013). In contrast, there is often little difference in effect before and after
356 chlorination in receptor-mediated assays (Escher et al. 2014) and preliminary screening revealed no
357 hormonal activity in the studied distribution networks (Besselink 2013). Therefore, while they
358 cannot be excluded, micropollutant transformation products are not expected to contribute
359 significantly to $BEQ_{\text{bio, after chlorination}}$.

360

361 *3.4. Contribution of volatile and non-volatile DBPs to the observed effect*

362 Volatile DBPs are not captured during SPE and consequently will not be present in sample extracts
363 tested in the bioassays. To overcome this limitation, $BEQ_{\text{chem, volatile}}$ was calculated using Equation 7,
364 with $EC_{\text{IR1.5}}$ values for the individual detected DBPs collected from Stalter et al. (2016a) (provided
365 in Table S1). This approach is justified because Stalter et al. (2016b) demonstrated that the $BEQ_{\text{chem,}}$
366 volatile stems mainly from known DBPs. Figure 3 indicates that the detected volatile DBPs only had a
367 minor contribution to the oxidative stress response, with the contribution greatest in May and often
368 later in the distribution network. This fits with previous findings of increased volatile THMs
369 concentrations along distribution networks (Dominguez-Tello et al. 2015).

370 BEQ_{bio} was also compared with $BEQ_{\text{chem, non-volatile}}$ for chemicals with a Henry's Law Constant
371 less than $1.00 \times 10^{-6} \text{ atm m}^3/\text{mol}$ (Table 3) to determine how much the detected non-volatile DBPs
372 contributed to the observed effect. The detected chemicals contributed between 0.16 to 204% of the
373 effect (Table S11), with the effect dominated by the HAN dibromoacetonitrile, particularly in
374 November and March, when it was present at higher concentrations. Smaller contributions stemmed
375 from the haloacetic acids, mainly bromochloroacetic acid and dibromoacetic acid.

376 Previous studies on surface water and chlorinated pool water have found that detected
377 chemicals typically contribute less than 2% of the oxidative stress response (Yeh et al. 2014, Neale
378 et al. 2017). The good mass balance in the present study might partially be an artefact because the
379 extraction methods differed between bioassays and chemical analysis. Hence the comparison has
380 some limitation. HAAs are fully charged compounds and are poorly extracted by SPE at pH > 2
381 when they are fully ionised (Stalter et al. 2016b). However, the contribution of HAAs to BEQ_{bio}
382 would be less than 1.3%. Thus the HAAs cannot be the reason for the discrepancy. Stalter et al.
383 (2016b) also found less than 20% recovery of dibromoacetonitrile by TELOS ENV SPE cartridges
384 at pH 1. If we assume a 20% recovery of dibromoacetonitrile, this compound would only contribute
385 23 to 40% to the overall observed effect, which appears more realistic. No single method will
386 extract all contaminants from a water sample, but the mixture toxicity modelling of volatile
387 compounds in the current study and the work of Stalter et al. (2016b) suggest that we are capturing
388 the majority of the toxicological relevant DBPs with SPE.

389

390 *3.5. Comparison of effects in current study with other water samples*

391 To gain an understanding of how the oxidative stress response in samples collected from the three
392 distribution networks compares to other water types, the EC_{IR1.5} values were compared to published
393 EC_{IR1.5} values for wastewater, surface water and drinking water (Figure 4). The effect was
394 considerably higher for wastewater effluent than the current study (Escher et al. 2014, Neale et al.
395 2017), while effects in some surface waters were within the same EC_{IR1.5} range (Escher et al. 2014,
396 Neale et al. 2015a, Neale et al. 2017). When considering disinfected drinking water, the effect of
397 chlorinated water from an Australian WTP was considerably higher (Neale et al. 2012), while
398 formation potential experiments with Australian WTP source water using sodium hypochlorite
399 (HOCl) and monochloramine (NH₂Cl) also yielded greater effects than the current study (Farré et
400 al. 2013). In both examples from the literature, the difference to our findings can be partially
401 attributed to the TOC concentration, which was generally around 2 to 3 mg/L in the Australian

402 studies, compared to 0.4 to 1.7 mg/L in the current study due to the more advanced treatment
403 processes. Only the DBP formation potential experiments using desalinated seawater, which had a
404 TOC concentration of less than 0.1 mg/L, yielded a similar effect as in the current study.

405 The NF- κ B response in the current study was also compared to other water types (Figure
406 S8). While drinking water samples have not previously been tested in the NF- κ B-*bla* assay, the
407 response in the current study is lower than wastewater and surface water (Escher et al. 2014, Neale
408 et al. 2015a, Neale et al. 2017).

409

410 3.6. Comparison of observed effects with effect-based trigger values

411 The likely presence of a complex mixture of micropollutants and DBPs in drinking water
412 emphasises the need for a bioanalytical health-related approach to evaluate drinking water safety
413 (Grummt et al. 2013). At the same time, many bioassays are very sensitive, with effects detected in
414 highly enriched mineral water in the AREc32 assay in the current study. Therefore, there is a need
415 for effect-based trigger values to differentiate between what is an acceptable or unacceptable
416 response (Escher et al. 2015). There have been a number of different approaches proposed in the
417 literature to derive effect-based trigger values. For example, Brand et al. (2013) proposed trigger
418 values based on the acceptable daily intake of the assay reference compound using equivalent
419 concentrations and accounting for some *in vitro* to *in vivo* toxicokinetic differences. Escher et al.
420 (2015) used an alternative approach by reading across from existing drinking water guidelines to
421 derive bioanalytical trigger values. Using the latter approach, the proposed effect-based trigger
422 value for drinking water in the AREc32 value is an EC_{IR1.5} of 6 (Escher et al. 2013). This is based on
423 the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, but suggests that there is a margin of safety of 2.5 to 16
424 between the proposed effect-based trigger value and the observed effects in French drinking water
425 (Figure 4). While further work is required to derive a French specific effect-based trigger value, this
426 comparison can be used to further illustrate the high quality of the treated water.

427

428 **4. Conclusions**

429 Three bioassays indicative of adaptive stress responses were applied in the current study to assess
430 the toxicological profile and monitor DBP formation in drinking water distribution networks. While
431 effects in the p53 response and the NF- κ B response assays were generally masked by cytotoxicity,
432 the oxidative stress response assay proved to be a sensitive tool to monitor the sum of all bioactive
433 chemicals in water. Not only did the observed effects generally correlate well with the detected
434 DBPs, but by comparing the effect before and after chlorination using the BEQ approach, it was
435 possible to assess the contribution of both formed DBPs and micropollutants in source water to the
436 overall effects in drinking water for the first time. This approach may provide guidance to WTP
437 operators by enabling them to target treatment processes that either reduce the micropollutant
438 concentration in the source water or limit DBP formation during disinfection. While routine sample
439 enrichment for bioanalysis will exclude volatile DBPs, mixture toxicity modelling demonstrated
440 that the volatile DBPs generally did not contribute significantly to the oxidative stress response.
441 This supports the use of current extraction methods to target the majority of the toxicologically
442 relevant DBPs. Overall, the effect of the water samples throughout the distribution networks was
443 low, as confirmed by the proposed effect-based trigger value, which reflects the high quality of the
444 treated water. This study demonstrates the suitability of a combined chemical analysis and
445 bioanalysis approach to monitor micropollutants and DBPs in drinking water.

446

447 **Acknowledgements**

448 Maria König and Christin Kühnert (both UFZ) are acknowledged for experimental assistance. Gaëla
449 Leroy, Delphine Brillant and Valérie Ingrand (all Veolia R&I Environment & Health Department,
450 Chemical Analysis and Mechanisms Unit) are acknowledged for water sample extractions and
451 cartridge experimental preparation and management. ALPA/CAE laboratory and IANESCO
452 laboratory are acknowledged for chemical analysis.

453

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588 **Table 1:** Overview of studied water treatment plants (WTP), treatment processes and sampling
 589 sites.

WTP location	Treatment processes	WTP capacity (m ³ /d)	Sampling site		
			Water age (h)	Site name	Disinfection
Méry-sur-Oise	1) Clarification, rapid sand filtration, ozonation, anthracite filtration, nanofiltration (70%) and 2) clarification, sand filtration, ozonation, granular activated carbon filtration (30%)	340,000	0	Outlet of WTP	-
			10	Ermont	Before re-chlorination
			50	Bezons	After re-chlorination
Choisy-le-Roi	Pre-ozonation, clarification, sand filtration, ozonation, granular activated carbon filtration, UV	600,000	0	Before chlorination	-
			0	Outlet of WTP	-
			8	Fresnes	Before re-chlorination
			30	Cachan	After re-chlorination
			50	Les-Loges-en-Josas	After re-chlorination
Neuilly-sur-Marne	Clarification, sand filtration, ozonation, granular activated carbon filtration, UV	600,000	0	Before chlorination	-
			0	Outlet of WTP	-
			25	Noisy-le-Sec	Before re-chlorination
			50	Clichy-la-Garenne	After re-chlorination

590

591 **Table 2:** Overview of studied bioassays.

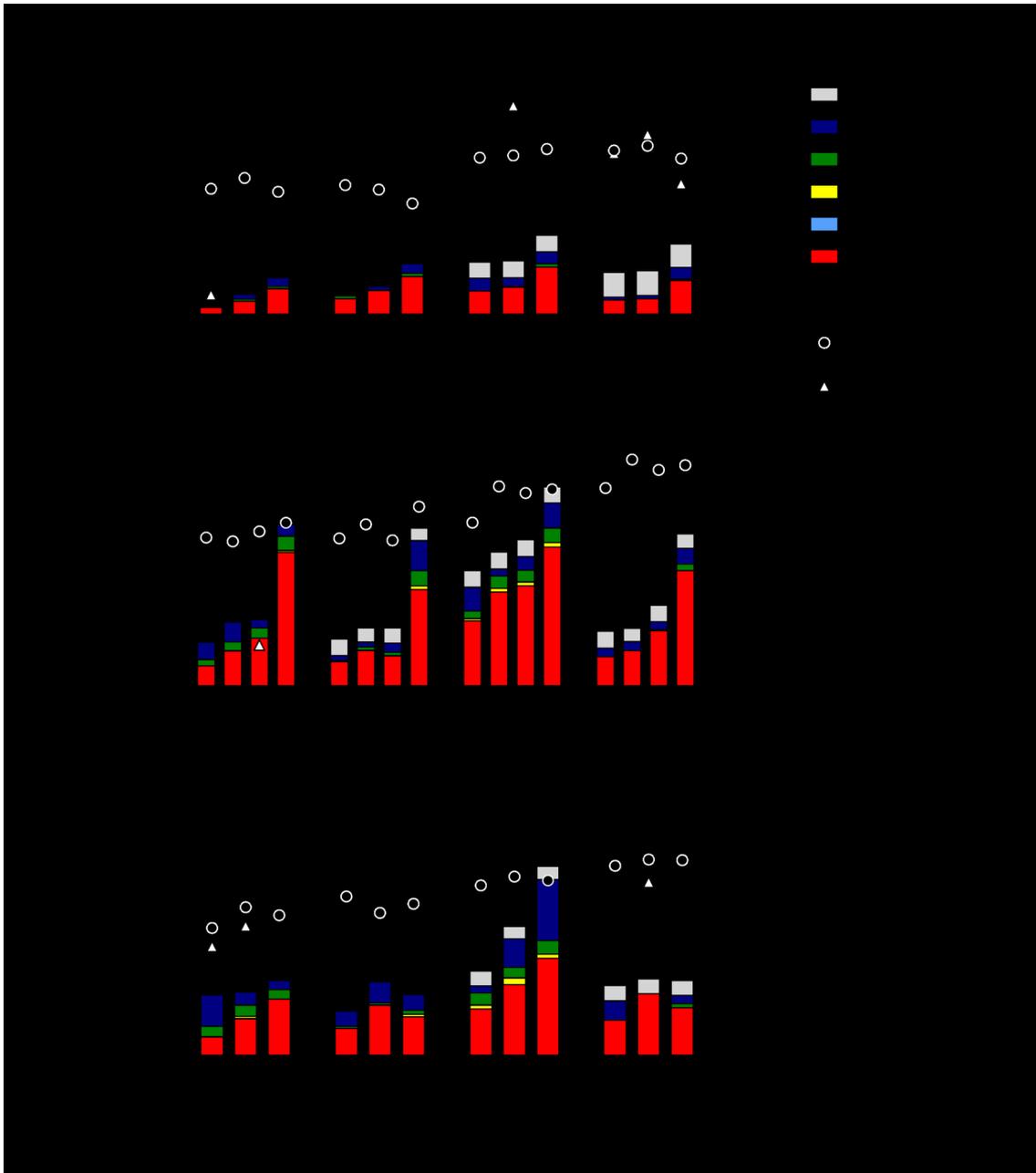
Endpoint	Assay	Method reference	Reference compound	Reference compound EC _{IR1.5} (M)
Oxidative stress response	AREc32	Wang et al. (2006), Escher et al. (2012)	tert-Butylhydroquinone (tBHQ)	1.93×10 ⁻⁶
p53 response	p53RE- <i>bla</i>	Neale et al. (2015b)	Mitomycin	1.16×10 ⁻⁷
NF-κB response	NF-κB- <i>bla</i>	König et al. (2017)	Tumour necrosis factor alpha (TNFα)	6.65×10 ^{-3*}

*units of μg/L

592 **Table 3:** BEQ_{bio}, BEQ_{chem}, non-volatile and BEQ_{chem,volatile} (M) for the different samples in the AREc32 assay.

WTP	Water age (h)	November			March			May			September		
		BEQ _{bio}	BEQ _{chem} , non-volatile	BEQ _{chem} , volatile	BEQ _{bio}	BEQ _{chem} , non-volatile	BEQ _{chem} , volatile	BEQ _{bio}	BEQ _{chem} , non-volatile	BEQ _{chem} , volatile	BEQ _{bio}	BEQ _{chem} , non-volatile	BEQ _{chem} , volatile
Méry-sur-Oise	0	(2.63±0.14) ×10 ⁻⁸	-	1.43×10 ⁻¹¹	(2.79±0.15) ×10 ⁻⁸	5.31×10 ⁻⁸	2.36×10 ⁻¹⁰	(4.25±0.18) ×10 ⁻⁸	1.71×10 ⁻¹⁰	3.05×10 ⁻¹¹	(4.74±0.22) ×10 ⁻⁸	8.12×10 ⁻¹¹	2.35×10 ⁻¹¹
	10	(3.11±0.19) ×10 ⁻⁸	4.54×10 ⁻⁸	2.67×10 ⁻¹¹	(2.60±0.12) ×10 ⁻⁸	1.95×10 ⁻⁸	3.83×10 ⁻¹¹	(4.39±0.20) ×10 ⁻⁸	2.54×10 ⁻⁸	4.40×10 ⁻¹¹	(5.10±0.19) ×10 ⁻⁸	8.12×10 ⁻¹¹	2.81×10 ⁻¹¹
	50	(2.51±0.14) ×10 ⁻⁸	5.20×10 ⁻⁸	4.90×10 ⁻¹¹	(2.10±0.10) ×10 ⁻⁸	2.27×10 ⁻⁸	3.19×10 ⁻⁹	(4.85±0.20) ×10 ⁻⁸	2.29×10 ⁻⁸	3.27×10 ⁻⁹	(4.19±0.18) ×10 ⁻⁸	3.00×10 ⁻⁸	6.40×10 ⁻¹¹
Choisyle-roi	Before Cl ₂	(1.98±0.10) ×10 ⁻⁸	-	-	(3.08±0.19) ×10 ⁻⁸	-	-	-	-	-	(6.67±0.41) ×10 ⁻⁸	-	-
	0	(3.76±0.23) ×10 ⁻⁸	4.43×10 ⁻⁸	4.10×10 ⁻⁹	(3.71±0.14) ×10 ⁻⁸	2.73×10 ⁻⁸	4.06×10 ⁻¹¹	(4.72±0.14) ×10 ⁻⁸	3.00×10 ⁻⁸	5.50×10 ⁻⁹	(8.04±0.26) ×10 ⁻⁸	2.00×10 ⁻¹⁰	4.95×10 ⁻¹¹
	8	(3.54±0.16) ×10 ⁻⁸	7.15×10 ⁻⁸	5.19×10 ⁻⁹	(4.60±0.13) ×10 ⁻⁸	3.70×10 ⁻⁸	7.46×10 ⁻¹⁰	(8.23±0.22) ×10 ⁻⁸	3.95×10 ⁻⁸	8.78×10 ⁻⁹	(1.25±0.04) ×10 ⁻⁷	2.07×10 ⁻¹⁰	6.15×10 ⁻¹¹
	30	(4.13±0.15) ×10 ⁻⁸	8.43×10 ⁻⁸	5.73×10 ⁻⁹	(3.60±0.12) ×10 ⁻⁸	3.64×10 ⁻⁸	8.73×10 ⁻¹⁰	(7.42±0.34) ×10 ⁻⁸	3.39×10 ⁻⁸	8.61×10 ⁻⁹	(1.06±0.03) ×10 ⁻⁷	2.80×10 ⁻⁸	9.68×10 ⁻¹¹
	50	(4.70±0.18) ×10 ⁻⁸	7.15×10 ⁻⁸	8.99×10 ⁻⁹	(6.04±0.28) ×10 ⁻⁸	7.79×10 ⁻⁸	9.14×10 ⁻⁹	(7.86±0.21) ×10 ⁻⁸	3.70×10 ⁻⁸	1.06×10 ⁻⁸	(1.14±0.04) ×10 ⁻⁷	2.80×10 ⁻⁸	4.55×10 ⁻⁹
Neuilly-sur-Meuse	Before Cl ₂	(3.10±0.13) ×10 ⁻⁸	-	-	(2.54±0.07) ×10 ⁻⁸	-	-	(4.05±0.16) ×10 ⁻⁸	-	-	(5.33±0.17) ×10 ⁻⁸	-	-
	0	(2.72±0.12) ×10 ⁻⁸	4.76×10 ⁻⁸	6.77×10 ⁻⁹	(4.41±0.13) ×10 ⁻⁸	4.41×10 ⁻⁸	3.47×10 ⁻¹¹	(5.22±0.22) ×10 ⁻⁸	3.95×10 ⁻⁸	7.92×10 ⁻⁹	(7.06±0.17) ×10 ⁻⁸	3.11×10 ⁻¹⁰	5.94×10 ⁻¹¹
	25	(3.73±0.19) ×10 ⁻⁸	4.36×10 ⁻⁸	5.57×10 ⁻⁹	(3.42±0.19) ×10 ⁻⁸	4.49×10 ⁻⁸	5.96×10 ⁻¹¹	(5.97±0.17) ×10 ⁻⁸	3.40×10 ⁻⁸	2.06×10 ⁻⁸	(7.78±0.33) ×10 ⁻⁸	-	1.01×10 ⁻¹⁰
	50	(3.30±0.13) ×10 ⁻⁸	4.62×10 ⁻⁸	6.35×10 ⁻⁹	(3.93±0.15) ×10 ⁻⁸	1.32×10 ⁻¹⁰	1.69×10 ⁻⁹	(5.63±0.19) ×10 ⁻⁸	4.25×10 ⁻⁸	9.65×10 ⁻⁹	(7.67±2.10) ×10 ⁻⁸	1.91×10 ⁻¹⁰	3.88×10 ⁻⁹

593 **Figure 1:** Sum concentration of detected DBPs and $EC_{IR1.5}$ values for the oxidative stress response
594 and NF- κ B response for A) Méry-sur-Oise, B) Choisy-le-Roi and C) Neuilly-sur-Marne. Note the
595 inverse axis for $EC_{IR1.5}$ that a higher effect is further to the top.



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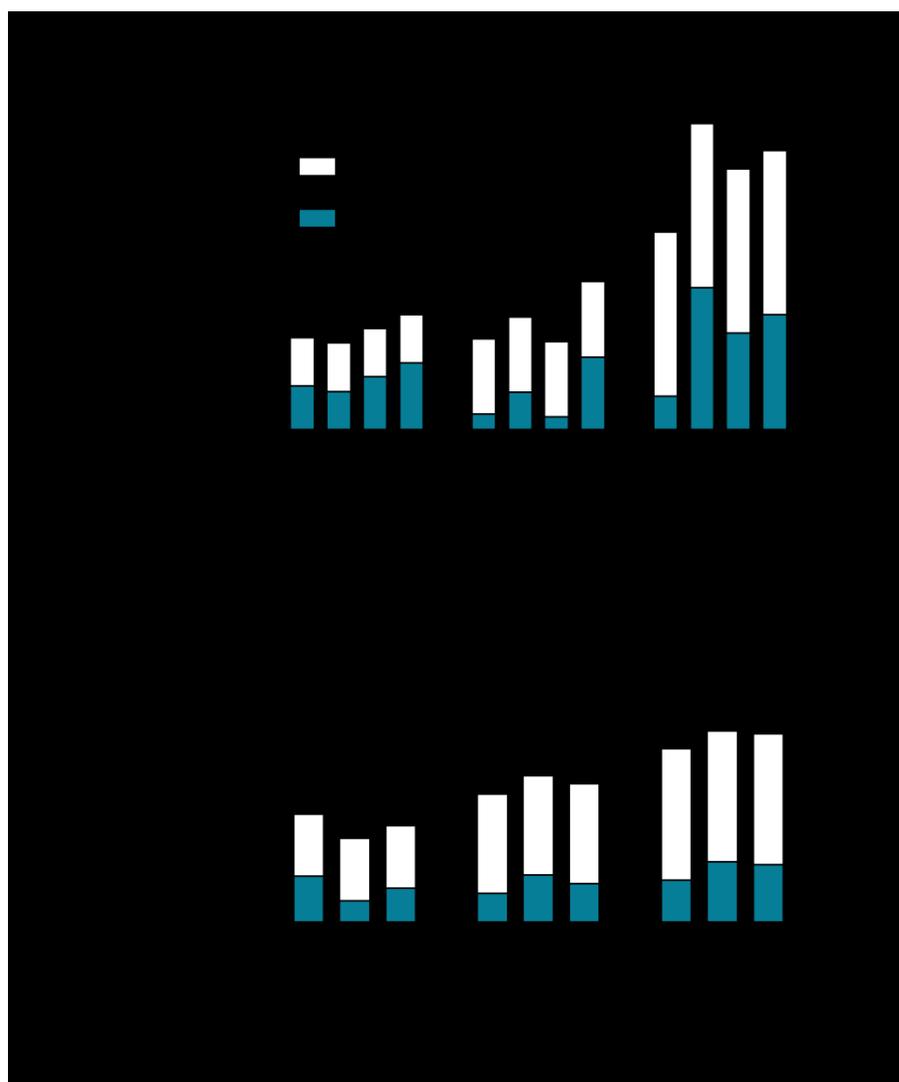
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601 **Figure 2:** Contribution of DBPs and other micropollutants to the oxidative stress response in A)
602 Choisy-le-Roi and B) Neuilly-sur-Marne.

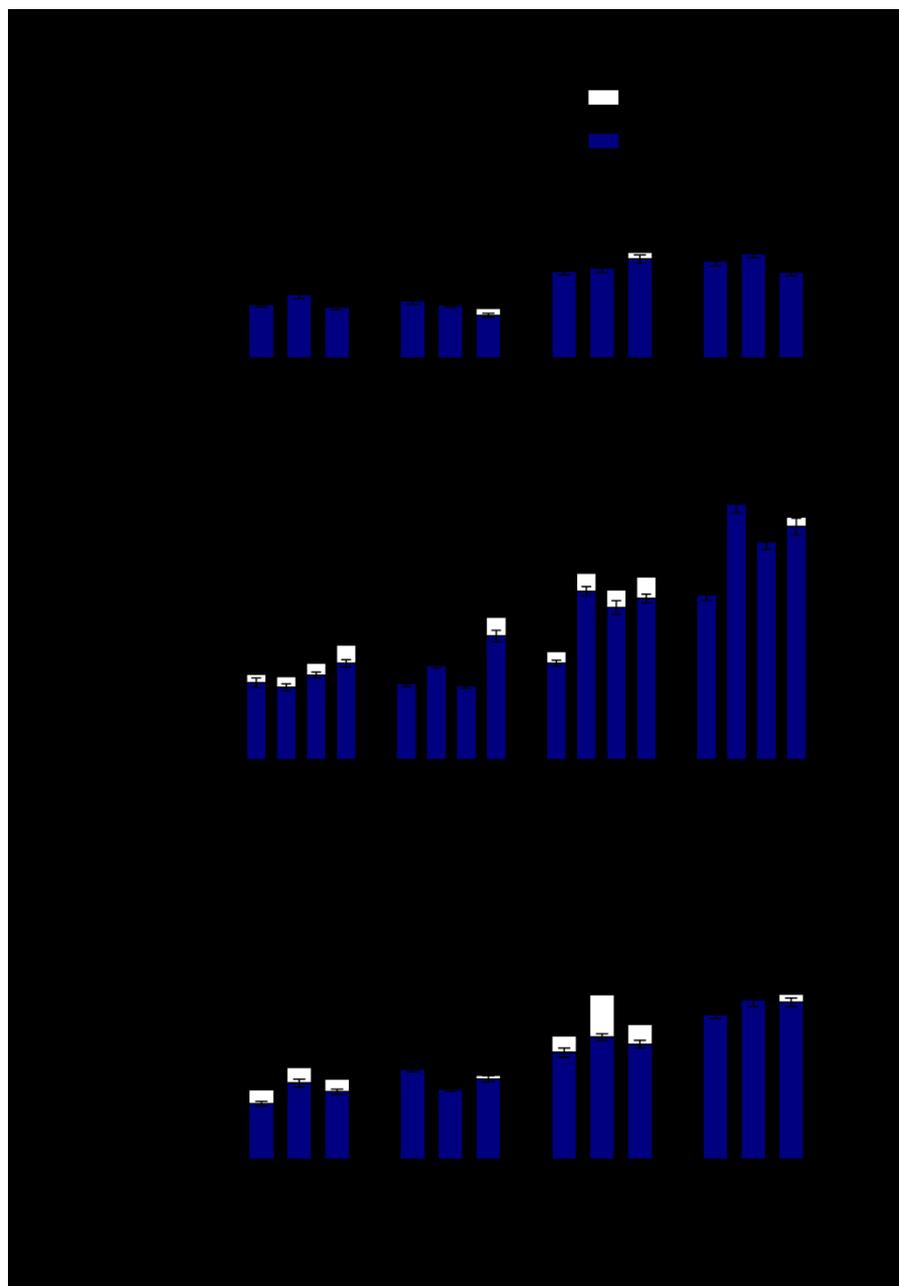


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606 **Figure 3:** Bioanalytical equivalent concentration from bioanalysis (BEQ_{bio}) and bioanalytical
607 equivalent concentration from chemical analysis for volatile chemicals ($BEQ_{chem, volatile}$) for A) Méry-
608 sur-Oise, B) Choisy-le-Roi and C) Neuilly-sur-Marne.



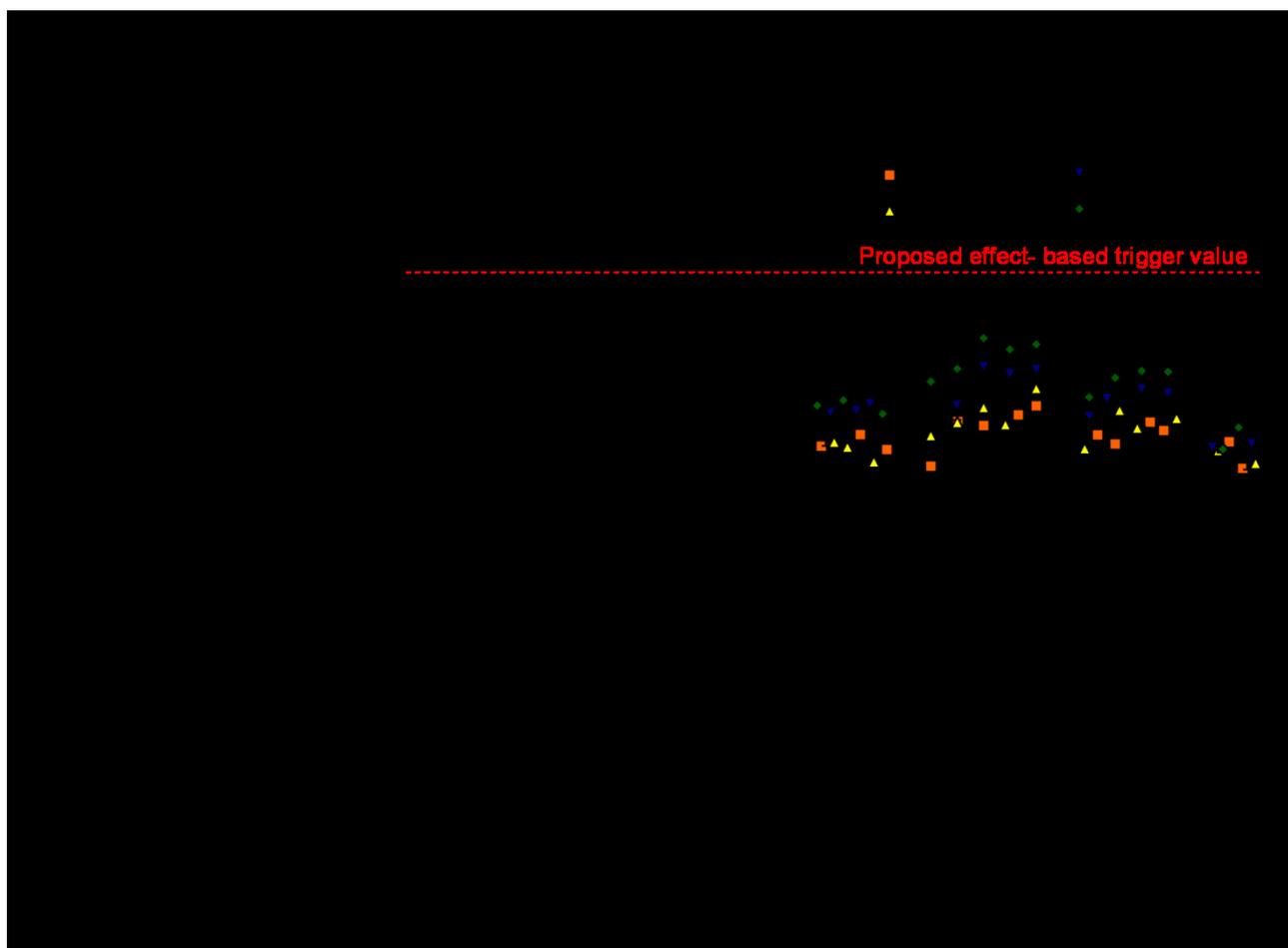
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611 **Figure 4:** Comparison of AREc32 $EC_{IR1.5}$ values from current study with $EC_{IR1.5}$ values for
612 wastewater, surface water and drinking water from the literature in units of relative enrichment
613 factor (REF). The proposed effect based trigger value for drinking water (REF 6) by Escher et al.
614 (2013) is shown by the red dashed line.

615 ^aEscher et al. (2014), ^bNeale et al. (2017), ^cNeale et al. (2015a), ^dNeale et al. (2012), ^eFarré et al.
616 (2013).

617 NB: ARE GeneBLAzer used instead of AREc32 for Neale et al. (2017) and Neale et al. (2015a).



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