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Aero-dispersed mutagenicity attributed to particulate and semi volatile phase in an urban environment

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Original Citation:

Availability:

This version is available <http://hdl.handle.net/2318/150871> since 2016-11-30T12:56:33Z

Published version:

DOI:10.1016/j.chemosphere.2014.12.033

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1 TITLE page:

2

3 **Aero-dispersed mutagenicity attributed to particulate and semi volatile phase in an urban environment.**

4

5 Short running title:

6 **Particulate and non-particulate mutagenicity in an urban environment**

7

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20 **KEY WORDS:** particulate matter, mutagenicity, , urban air pollution, gas phase pollution

21

22 **ABSTRACT**

23 Commonly the atmospheric pollution research is focussed on particulate indicators especially when

24 mutagenicity was studied. On the other hand the volatile and semi-volatile compounds no adsorbed on to

25 the particles can be genotoxic and mutagenic. Moreover some mutagenic compounds, such as polycyclic

26 aromatic hydrocarbons, are present both in the particulate and in the gas-phase in according to chemical

27 conditions. This work is focussed on the assessing of the total mutagenicity shifting the gas-phase and

28 particulate phase, during two seasons, in Turin. Two sampling sessions are conducted for total particulate
29 matter and gas-phase pollutants. Moreover meteorological and usual air pollution monitoring data were
30 collected at the same sampling station. The Salmonella assay using the strains TA98 and YG1021 was
31 conducted on each organic extract. The mean level of total suspended particles, PM10 and PM2.5 were
32 73.63 ± 26.94 , 42.85 ± 26.75 and $31.55 \pm 26.35 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. The observed mutagenicity was PM induced YG1021 >
33 PM induced TA98 > PM induced TA98+S9 >> non-particle induced YG1021 > non-particle induced TA98 >
34 non-particle induced TA98+S9. The multivariate regression is significant when we consider air pollution and
35 meteorological indicators and chemical conditions as predictors.

36

37 **HIGHLIGHTS**

38 Both chemicals and meteo-chemical parameters can influence the mutagenicity of air pollution.

39 The gas phase and particulate phase mutagenicity can be different and affected by season.

40 The gas phase accounted for only 1% of the observed mutagenicity.

41 The particulate mutagenicity is approximately 5-fold higher during winter.

42 The contribution of the nitro-derived compounds seems to be crucial.

43

44 **1. Introduction**

45 Air pollution is one of the most important worldwide health concerns (WHO-Europe, 2013). Particularly in
46 the last 10 years, in both the US and Europe, new directives and regulations supporting more restrictive
47 pollution limits were published (Krzyzanowski, 2008). However, the early effects of air pollution cannot be
48 avoided, especially for the urban population (EEA, 2012). A recent Eurobarometer survey showed that
49 European citizens are deeply concerned about the impact of air pollution and that more than 70% of the
50 European population is worried that air pollution and air quality is worsening over time (EU, 2013). The
51 decision to designate 2013 as the Year of Air reflects both the economic seriousness of the problem but
52 also the impacts on humans. Approximately 3 % of cardiopulmonary and 5 % of lung cancer deaths are
53 attributable to particulate matter (PM) pollution worldwide (HEI, 2013), while the disease burden related
54 specifically to PM2.5 pollution accounts for approximately 3.1% of the global disability-adjusted life years

55 (Lim et al., 2012).

56 The total suspended particulate (TSP) air pollution is widespread and consists of a mixture of solid and
57 liquid particles suspended in the air. The physical and chemical characteristics of TSP vary by site. Common
58 chemical constituents of PM include sulphates, nitrates, ammonium and other inorganic ions, but also
59 include organic carbon, crustal material, particle-bound water, metals, aromatic hydrocarbons such as
60 polycyclic hydrocarbons and their nitrated, oxidised, sulphated forms (Claxton et al., 2004; Breyse et al.,
61 2013). Especially in urban polluted locations, the secondary particulates formed from precursor gases are
62 the prevalent toxic agents. Particle accumulation and coagulation reactions in the atmosphere produce a
63 fine fraction of particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) that often constitutes more than fifty percent of the TSP
64 (Dimitriou and Kassomenos, 2013). The emitted chemicals, the dispersion conditions, and physical
65 parameters such as humidity and temperature (Zhang et al., 2012) can all influence particle formation.
66 A large number of studies provide evidence of a correlation between both for short term and long-term
67 exposure to PM pollution and health effects such as morbidity and mortality from cardiovascular and
68 respiratory diseases, as well as from lung cancer (Krzyzanowski, 2008). At the end of 2013, outdoor air
69 pollution and its major component, outdoor particulate matter were classified as carcinogenic for humans
70 (1 Group) (Loomis et al., 2013).

71 Many mutagenic and genotoxic compounds are present in air pollution, and the effects are widely known
72 and reviewed (de Kok et al., 2006; Claxton and Woodall, 2007a; Valavanidis et al., 2008; DeMarini, 2013).
73 The finest air pollution fractions, PM₁₀ (particles with a diameter of less than 10 µm) and PM_{2.5} (particles
74 with a diameter of less than 2.5 µm) show greater genotoxicity (Claxton et al., 2004) , while the ultrafine
75 particles (particles having a diameter of less than 0.1 µm) are the subject of in-depth analyses (Hoek et al.,
76 2010; Kovats et al., 2013). The studies conducted using *in vivo* and *in vitro* models show the induction of
77 mutations and genotoxic effects. However, non-genotoxic effects also occur and various studies focused on
78 the epigenetic effects of the ambient particles (Ji and Hershey, 2012).

79 Among the typical air pollution chemicals, Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons PAHs have a relevant role in air
80 pollution toxicity. These compounds are reactive in the atmosphere and primarily form oxidised products,
81 the most notable being oxy-derivatives (mostly quinones) and nitrated compounds (Kim et al., 2013). Some

82 of these compounds, such as benzo(a)pyrene and 6-ditrochrysene and the 7,12-
83 dimethylbenz(a)anthracene, are also present in primary emissions. Benzo(a)pyrene is the reference
84 compound for the carcinogenic relative potency factor, while others previously cite PAHs as having a
85 carcinogenic factor of 10 and 64, respectively. Also among the secondary PAHs are compounds with high
86 carcinogenic relative potency factors such as benz(j)aceanthrylene (60) and 1,6-dinitropyrene (10) (ATSDR,
87 1995). The historic list of 16 USEPA priority PAHs is an important source of information, but was developed
88 when knowledge of the relative toxicity of PAH congeners was more limited than at present. As such, it is
89 useful as reference for monitoring but limited for the assessment of human health risks attributable to air
90 PAH mixture exposition (Yang et al., 2007).

91 Vapor–particle partitioning of mutagens can be quantified using the gas–particle-partitioning coefficient for
92 each compound. This coefficient is influenced by both the adsorption and absorption processes and is
93 strongly temperature dependent (Albinet et al., 2008). Moreover, volatile and semi-volatile organic
94 compounds associated with particulate matter can be influenced by heterogeneous photochemical
95 reactions in the atmosphere (Fraser et al., 2000; Xie et al., 2013). Our typical samplings were conducted
96 using standard methods that are affected by relevant limits (Liu et al., 2007; Forbes et al., 2012).

97 The aim of this work is to assess the mutagenicity of particulate and not-particulate air pollution and to
98 determine the effects of seasonality and the contribution of nitro-compounds to the mutagenic effects in
99 an urban environment.

100

101 **2. Materials and methods**

102 **2.1 Sampling**

103 Sampling was performed from 20 November to 22 December 2009 for the winter period and from 4 May to
104 4 June 2010 for the spring period at a meteorological–chemical station of the Environmental Protection
105 Regional Agency (Piedmont A.R.P.A.) located at Torino, in the northwest of the Padana Plain, Italy. The
106 sampling site, called Lingotto, was located outdoors in a small green area within an enclosed zone classified
107 as urban background (ARPA Piemonte, 2010). Turin has 872,367 inhabitants and a population density of
108 approximately 7,000 inhabitants per km²; thus, the pressure on the territory that is associated with human

109 activity is very high (ISTAT, 2012). Moreover, the climate and topographical characteristics of the area
110 contribute to critical air pollution (Poncino et al., 2009; Eeftens et al., 2012). The Total Suspended Particles
111 (TSP) were collected on glass micro-fibre filters (Type Fiberfilm T60A20, 150 mm, SKC, 863 Valley View Road
112 Eighty Four, PA 15330, USA) and micro-pollutants were collected in Polyurethane Foam (PUF) Sorbent
113 Tubes (SKC, 226-131 Valley View Road Eighty Four, PA 15330, USA) using an AirFlowPuf Sampler and
114 conforming with the US EPA methods TO-4A, TO-9A, TO13A, ASTM D-6209 and ISO-12884, ISO-16362
115 (Analitica Strumenti Samplers, via degli Abeti 144 61100 Pesaro, Italy).

116 The TSP were collected on glass fibre filters, and the polyurethane foam (PUF) cartridge was placed in series
117 after the glass fibre filter. The volatile compounds, which were not trapped on the filter, were retained in
118 the PUF cartridge.

119 The sampling flow was electronically controlled to be 250 L/min. Each sampling duration was controlled by
120 a timer that was accurate to ± 15 min over a 48-hour sampling period. The exact flow rate was calculated
121 daily and corrected for variations in atmospheric pressure and actual differential pressure across the filter.
122 The filters were conditioned for 48 h and were weighed using an analytical balance ($\pm 10 \mu\text{g}$) before and
123 after sampling to calculate the mass of the TSP trapped on the filter. The procedures were conducted
124 according to the European Committee for Standardization. Additionally, , the PUF had been pre-cleaned by
125 24 h Soxhlet extractions using acetone.

126

127 **2.2 Extraction and mutagenicity assays**

128 Each sample was extracted with acetone in a Soxhlet apparatus for a minimum of 80 cycles. The samples
129 were dried in a Rotavapor instrument, and suspended in dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) to obtain an equivalent
130 concentration of 0.1 m^3 of sampled air per μl of solution. The mutagenicity assay was conducted as
131 previously described (Maron and Ames, 1983; Traversi et al., 2009). Defined amounts of organic extract
132 were tested to generate a dose–response curve (2, 5, 10, 20, 30 air equivalent m^3 for the TSP extracts and
133 10, 20,30, 50, 100 air equivalent m^3 for the PUF extracts). The slope of the dose–response curve
134 (revertants/ m^3) was calculated by the least squares linear regression beginning at the first linear portion of
135 the dose–response curve (Traversi et al., 2011). All experiments were performed in triplicate using at least

136 three doses. The results are expressed as net revertants per cubic metre (rev/m³) (the total revertants
137 minus the spontaneous revertants) and were calculated using the dose–response curve (Cassoni et al.,
138 2004; Claxton et al., 2004). The mutagenic activity of the airborne particulate extracts was determined
139 using the *Salmonella typhimurium* strain TA98, with and without S9 mix, as well as the YG1021 strain.
140 YG1021 is a ‘classical’ nitroreductase-overproducing strain obtained by cloning the nitroreductase gene of
141 *S. typhimurium* TA1538 into the pBR322 vector and introducing the recombinant plasmid into TA98
142 (Josephy et al., 1997). YG1021 has a nitrofurazone reductase activity more than 50 times higher than the
143 original TA98 strain, permitting the efficient detection of mutagenic nitroarenes. The mean number of
144 spontaneous revertants, obtained during a 10 bioassay series, one every two samplings, was 16 ± 4 for
145 TA98, 21 ± 1 for TA98+S9 and 23 ± 5 for YG1021. The genotype of each tester strain was routinely
146 confirmed. In each assay session, positive and negative controls were included. Moreover, the known
147 mutagen 2-nitrofluorene (1 µg/plate) was tested in each assay as a positive control for the strains TA98 and
148 YG1021 while aminofluorene (1 µg/plate) was used as a positive control for the TA98 strain in presence of
149 S9 mix.

150

151 **2.3 Chemicals and inhalable particles data**

152

153 Chemical data and inhalable particles data (PM10 and PM2.5) were extracted from a specialised database
154 provided by the Regional System for the real-time monitoring of Air Quality, AriaWeb (ARPA Piemonte,
155 2014). The data were obtained for the same day as our sampling and for the same sampling station. For
156 example, the NO_x data represent a monthly mean of hourly data collected using the standard monitoring
157 method EN 14211:2005 (2008/50/EC, annex VI, section B). All the adopted methods conform to the
158 directive and were validated before being published in the AriaWeb database (ARPA Piemonte, 2014).

159

160 **2.4 Statistics**

161

162

The seasons were designated as winter for the first sampling session (November and December) and as
spring for the second sampling session (May and June). The statistical analyses were performed using the

163 SPSS Package, version 21.0. In particular we applied: (1) a log transformation of non-normally distributed
164 data, (2) the Spearman rank-order correlation coefficient to assess relationships between variables, (3) a
165 Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test to compare means. The mean differences and correlations were considered
166 significant if $p < 0.05$.

167

168 3. Results

169 3.1 Gravimetric analysis

170 The descriptive analysis of the collected data is shown in **Table 1**. The gravimetric data showed that, on
171 average, **meanly** the TSP proportion in the samples was 58% PM10 and 43% PM2.5. Moreover, during the
172 high pollution period in winter, these proportions increased up to 70% and 61%, with a PM2.5/PM10 ratio
173 equal to 0.87. Moreover, **Figure 1** highlights the marked seasonal differences for all three particulate
174 indicators, with the **mean comparison** between winter and spring means for TSP, PM10 and PM2.5 being
175 significant ($p < 0.01$). The mean reduction in TSP in the spring with respect to winter was 30%, with mean
176 reductions of 68% for PM10 and 82% for PM2.5. The mean temperature differences between sampling
177 seasons was significantly different by ($p < 0.01$) with the mean winter temperature being 2.95 ± 4.09 °C and
178 the mean spring temperature being 16.55 ± 4.20 °C. However neither the average humidity nor the wind
179 speed were significantly different, with 0.73% humidity during the winter vs. 0.64% spring ($p > 0.05$) and ,an
180 average wind speed in both seasons of approximately 10 m/s (**Table 1**).

181

182 3.2 Mutagenicity

183 The mutagenicity tests show **a significantly elevated** of net revertants per unit of exposure (air equivalent
184 m^3) **respect to the negative control. An elevated number of net revertants (250) was recorded at the**
185 **highest test doses for the winter TSP extracts in the YG1021 strain, while the mutagenicity of the PUF**
186 **extracts was markedly lower (Table 1)**. The PUF extracts contribute only about 2% to the total
187 mutagenicity. As **figure 2** also shows, the mutagenicity of the samples, expressed as net revertants, from
188 higher to the lower was PM induced YG1021 > PM induced TA98 > PM induced TA98+S9 >> non-particle
189 induced YG1021 > non-particle induced TA98 > non-particle induced TA98+S9. Moreover, the seasonal

190 trend is clearly evident and significant only for particulate-induced mutagenicity (YG1021 $p < 0.01$; TA98
191 $p < 0.01$; TA98+S9 $p < 0.01$). The mutagenicity of the spring TSP samples is less than 10% of the mutagenicity
192 recorded for the winter samples in all the strains.

193 The higher mutagenicity of the winter particles was confirmed also adjusting the data for particles mass
194 unit (Figure 3), highlighting the worse quality of the particles- in terms of mutagen presence - and not only
195 the higher level of aero-dispersed pollution for each volume unit.

196 Among the chemicals variability we observed a not so great changeability during the year for PAHs and
197 metals, observing a difference due to seasonality. More variability is instead observable for NO_x and ozone,
198 however also in this case the levels are clearly affected by seasonality (with highest value recoding in winter
199 with the ozone exception)(table 1). Table 2 showed the correlations between variables. Only the variables
200 for which at least one correlation with mutagenicity is significant was included, the not particles induced
201 mutagenicity was however included for its experimental origin, favoring the mutagenicity results
202 comparison.

203 As presented, the mutagenicity attributed to the non-particle phase was not influenced by the
204 environmental temperature or wind speed and, furthermore, does not correlate with the mutagenicity of
205 the particle phase. Additionally, the chemical parameters did not correlate with the minimal mutagenic
206 effects of the non-particle phase (table 2).

207 In contrast, the temperature and wind speed significantly inversely correlated with the TSP levels and to
208 mutagenicity of this mixture. The TSP level correlated with mutagenicity and, in particular, this correlation
209 showed a higher Spearman's rho for TA98 strain, with and without the addition of the S9 mixture. The
210 results of the mutagenicity assays conducted using the TSP extracts all correlate with each other (**Table 2**).

211 Among the chemical parameters, the TSP mutagenicity correlates with the presence of nitrogen oxides and,
212 in particular, this relationship is more marked for the nitrogen monoxides. The ozone levels inversely and
213 significantly correlate with the TSP mutagenicity. The cadmium and nickel levels significantly correlate with
214 direct mutagenicity (i.e., without the introduction of the metabolic activation). The TSP mutagenicity
215 correlates to the concentration of the finest fraction of the particulate matter and, in particular, there is a
216 better correlation with the PM10 fraction in the TA98 strain with and without metabolic activation. A

217 significant correlation is not observed between benzo(a)pyrene or benzo(a)anthracene and mutagenicity but
218 there was a high correlation between PAHs and with metals (0.929 $p < 0.01$) due probably mainly to the
219 same seasonality.

220 Among the meteo climatic variables the temperature showed the high influence to the particulate pollution
221 and associated mutagenicity, moreover this physical parameter is not significantly correlated to the wind
222 that also showed an influence on the particulate pollution dispersion but not on the NO_x and ozone levels.

223 The humidity during the sampling showed a quite constant level so in this study we can't observe an
224 influence on the pollution level.

225 The NO_x, in particular NO, among the chemicals correlated with particulate pollution and associated
226 mutagenicity, moreover with PAHs, cadmium and nickel. This result was similar to those previously
227 observed in other studies (Du Four et al., 2004; Du Four et al., 2005).

228

229 4. Discussion

230 In our study, the inhalable fraction and the high-risk inhalable fraction represented a very high proportion
231 of the TSP, highlighting a human health hazard comparable to that estimated for urban sites. The observed
232 pollution levels are significantly higher than both the WHO guidelines (Krzyzanowski, 2008) and the EU
233 regulations 2008/50/CE. In addition, critical particle concentrations are present particularly during the
234 winter and especially for PM_{2.5}. Recently, the IARC classified outdoor pollution and particulate matter, as
235 its major component, as carcinogenic for humans (Loomis et al., 2013). Consequently, reducing air pollution
236 and particle matter to the lowest amount possible is becoming a marked priority.

237 Particulate matter clearly contributed to the overall mutagenicity (**Figure 2**). This observation confirmed
238 the evidence of other studies where PM total air toxicity and genotoxicity was higher than the gas phase
239 fraction. In particular, PM₁ was responsible for approximately 80% of the observed effects at various
240 sampling localities (Novak et al., 2014), and the fine particles generally showed higher mutagenicity
241 (Claxton et al., 2004; Claxton and Woodall, 2007b; Lemos et al., 2012). The gas phase mutagenicity was very
242 low and often indeterminable, with the exception of particular sampling sites such as industrial sites (Du
243 Four et al., 2005) and exhaust emissions from gasoline- and diesel-powered passengers cars (Pohjola et al.,

244 2003a; Pohjola et al., 2003b). The contribution of the gas phase with respect to the particulate phase seems
245 to be higher during summer and related to the major PAHs content (Du Four et al., 2004; Kennedy et al.,
246 2010). In the present study, the contribution of the gas phase with respect to the particulate phase is
247 relative; in summer the particulate phase mutagenicity is reduced while the gas phase mutagenicity
248 remains quite constant. **It is supposable that this level of mutagenicity is not imputable to climatic or
249 chemical stress condition and it indicates probably a background mutagenicity level hardly to avoid.**

250 The benzo(a)pyrene concentration was higher during the winter than summer and higher than the WHO
251 guide line value of 0.12 ng/m³ (Krzyzanowski, 2008; WHO-Europe, 2013). As widely observed, the PAHs are
252 generally higher in the gas phase (Lemos et al., 2012), however, this fraction is less genotoxic and
253 mutagenic, and thus PAH concentration explains only a small part of air pollution toxicity. Moreover, PAHs
254 can react with nitrogen oxides, generating more genotoxic and mutagenic compounds (Albinet et al., 2008).
255 The contribution of the nitro-derivate compounds to the overall mutagenicity, as assessed by comparing
256 the number of Salmonella YG1021 net revertants to the strain without the modified nitro-reductase
257 activity, was marked. The ratio of the net revertants observed in the TA98 and YG1021 strains is
258 approximately 1:2, during both summer and winter. This observation is widely confirmed by other studies
259 (Ramos de Rainho et al.; Traversi et al., 2009). **Moreover the direct mutagens action is higher than indirect
260 mutagens as highlighted by the ratio of the net revertants observed in the TA98 and TA98+S9 that is
261 approximately of 1:1.7.**

262 Air pollution and its major components have a marked seasonality, and the toxic content in the gas phase
263 and particulate phase can vary based upon the meteo-climatic conditions (Albinet et al., 2008). In
264 particular, more nitro-derived compounds can be present in the particulates during winter, thus enhancing
265 the genotoxic and mutagenic properties.

266

267 **5. Conclusions**

268 By combining data on meteo-climatic conditions, various air pollution indicators and mutagenicity assays
269 we produced an evaluation of particulate and non-particulate air pollution in Turin during different season..
270 We present the following results:

- 271 • In the present study, the mutagenicity of the gas phase sampled by PUF method is practically
272 negligible with respect to the mutagenicity of the particulate phase. The gas phase accounted for
273 only 1% of the observed mutagenicity.
- 274 • The mutagenicity of the non-particulate phase remained constant during the summer and winter,
275 while the particulate mutagenicity is approximately 5-fold higher during winter when the finest
276 fraction of the PM increases.
- 277 • The contribution of the nitro-derived compounds seems to be crucial in Turin, in both winter and
278 summer.
- 279 • Both chemicals (such as NO_x, metals and PAHs) and meteo-chemical parameters (such as
280 temperature, wind speed and humidity) can influence the mutagenicity of particulate matter.
281 Moreover, the total mutagenicity recorded in winter most likely results from the combination of
282 not only additive but also synergistic effects among the components of the air pollution, conducting
283 both to higher particulate level and to a higher content of mutagens in each unit particulate mass;
- 284 • Although PUF sampling is a common approach used in gas phase studies, there were relevant
285 uncertainties regarding the applicability to biological *in vitro* models. A crucial point is the
286 necessary extraction procedure between the sampling and the *in vitro* test. It is not presumably
287 able to avoid a partial loss of the volatile and semi-volatile compounds. This more research is
288 necessary to understand this problem.

289 Finally, the biological assays are relevant tools for the evaluation of the environmental and human health
290 impact of air pollution.

291

292 **6. Conflict of interest statement**

293 The authors have nothing to declare. Funding source: this study was co-funded by the University of Turin
294 (local funds ex-60% 2012) and the Piedmont Region (Italy) in the field of health projects.

295

296 **7. Acknowledgements**

297 The authors thank the Environmental Protection Agency of Piedmont, especially dott. F. Lollobrigida and
298 dott.ssa M. Maringo, for their collaboration in the sample collection and Dr. T. Nohmi of the National
299 Institute of Hygienic Sciences of Tokyo for the *S. typhimurium* YG1021 and TA98NR strains.

300

301 **8 List of abbreviations:**

302 PAHs Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons

303 PCR Polymerase Chain Reaction

304 TSP Total Suspended Particles

305 PM Particulate matter

306 PM10 Particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter < 10 μm

307 PM2.5 Particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter < 2.5 μm

308

309 **Table legends:**

310 **Table 1** -Descriptive analysis on 20 total measurements for each parameter **are showed median and first**
311 **and third quartiles** .

312

313 **Table 2** -Spearman's correlation between the mutagenicity, gravimetric, chemical and meteorological
314 variables ¹ rho = -0.436, p=0.054

315

316 **Figure legends:**

317 **Figure 1** - Mean and standard deviation of TSP, PM10 and PM2.5 levels recorded during the winter and
318 spring sampling sessions.

319 **Figure 2** - Total mutagenicity, subdivided into gas phase and particulate phase, recorded for the winter and
320 summer samples with metabolically different strains.

321 **Figure 3** - Net revertants expressed as unit mass of total suspended particulate for the different strain and
322 the different seasons.

323

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