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1 Use of a clay mineral and its nonionic and cationic organoclay  
2 derivatives for the removal of pharmaceuticals from rural wastewater  
3 effluents

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16

17 **Highlights**

18

- 19 • Significant occurrence of pharmaceuticals (PPs) in a rural wastewater treatment  
20 facility
- 21 • Use of clay and organoclay as adsorbents for PPs showing different organic moieties
- 22 • Removal of PPs from a wastewater solution appears efficient at low concentration

- 23 • Electrostatic interaction seems to be the main driving force for PPs adsorption

24

## 25 **Keywords**

26 Rural water treatment, emerging pollutants, pharmaceuticals, adsorption, organoclay

27

## 28 **Abstract**

29

30 A Na<sup>+</sup> exchanged montmorillonite clay (Na-Mt) and its organoclay derivatives prepared with  
31 benzyldimethyltetradecylammonium (BDTA) cationic and polyoxyethylene(20)oleyl-ether  
32 (Brij-O20) non-ionic surfactants were used for first time at our knowledge as adsorbents the  
33 removal diverse pharmaceuticals (PPs) from samples collected in a rural wastewater facility  
34 (town of Josnes in France). The selected facility showed a poor efficiency for the elimination  
35 of PPs that were permanently release to the environment. Although involving different  
36 interactional mechanisms, the whole adsorbents Na-Mt, nonionic Brij-Mt and cationic BDTA-  
37 Mt organoclays, could remove the entire PPs of various chemical nature in a low  
38 concentration regime (ng L<sup>-1</sup>), where electrostatic interactions mainly controlled the  
39 adsorption. Thus, the organic PPs cations were preferentially adsorbed onto Na-Mt and  
40 Brij<sub>0.4</sub>-Mt (with its dual hydrophilic-hydrophobic nature) while anionic PPs showed a bold  
41 affinity to BDTA-Mt. The hydrophobic environment generated by the intercalation of  
42 surfactants within the interlayer space of organoclays conferred a versatility for the adsorption  
43 of numerous PPs through weak molecular forces (Van der Waals and/or pi-pi interactions).  
44 The study confirmed the proper efficiency of the studied layered materials including  
45 organoclays and emphasized about their promising interests in water remediation strategy.

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## 47 **1. Introduction**

48 Constructed wetlands and lagoon-based systems represent elegant and low-cost water  
49 remediation technologies used by numerous small communities in Europe (Zhang and Li,  
50 2011; Verlicchi and Zambello, 2014; Thiebault et al., 2016a; Thiebault et al., 2016b; Kania et  
51 al., 2018). While constructed wetlands assisted by phyto-planted filters appear quite  
52 sophisticated with the design of several stages of vertical-flow filters including the action of  
53 sludge, the lagoon type is quite simple leaning against the presence of micro-organisms  
54 combined with solar UV radiation for the removal of diverse organic contaminants. However,  
55 this easy set-up purification system which requires little maintenance mainly suffers from a  
56 lack of efficiency in wintertime when the biological activity and solar radiation are weak.  
57 Thus the incapacity of the lagoon type waste water treatment plants to completely eliminate  
58 organic pollutants including pharmaceutical products (PPs) and in particular the hydrophobic  
59 ones leads to their continuous discharge in the aquatic network with concentrations that can  
60 spread out from a few to several hundred  $\text{ng L}^{-1}$  (Kolpin et al., 2002; Tixier et al., 2003;  
61 Zhang et al., 2007; De Oliveira and Guégan, 2016; De Oliveira et al., 2017; De Oliveira et al.,  
62 2018). Besides their presence in top surface water in such concentration range, the toxicity of  
63 PPs was widely confirmed by numerous studies emphasizing their hazardous behaviours, and  
64 the consequences of mixtures or cocktails of PPs (including those based on hormones). The  
65 exposure of ecosystems to PPs may cause various perturbations in different species such as  
66 about the changes of gender in fish and amphibian species for instance and even possible  
67 hazardous effects to humans. The conjugate toxicity of multiple PPs associated with other  
68 contaminants can also be drastically superior than the effects of only one pollutant.

69 Industrial techniques bearing on chemical and physical processes such as oxidation, UV  
70 irradiation or the use of activated carbons show excellent results for the removal of organic

71 contaminants but are traditionally limited for the production of drinking water. Indeed,  
72 moreover of their expensive costs, both UV degradation and oxidation generate metabolites or  
73 by products of which side effects are still hard to predict. In contrast, adsorption based on  
74 porous materials appears as the most efficient and simplest way to eliminate micro-pollutants  
75 (Guégan, 2011; Carli et al., 2015; Guégan et al., 2015; Thiebault et al., 2016a; Thiebault et al.,  
76 2016b; Guégan et al., 2017; Guégan, 2019; Guégan et al., 2020). Among the possible  
77 adsorbents, raw clay minerals represent interesting materials with a reasonable cost, and  
78 appropriate adsorption properties with a large specific surface area, and capacity to exchange  
79 ions but show their limits to the hydrophobic PPs. With the intercalation of both cationic and  
80 non-ionic surfactants within the interlayer space of raw clay minerals, hybrid layered  
81 materials, organoclays are formed (Madejová et al., 2016; Slaný et al., 2019). Organoclays,  
82 with their hydrophobic nature and abilities to exchange ions, show adsorption properties for  
83 numerous organic products including PPs for various experimental conditions mimicking  
84 those of the natural context (Guégan et al., 2015; De Oliveira and Guégan, 2016; De Oliveira  
85 et al., 2018; Guégan, 2019). If the sorption onto raw clay minerals of PPs at low starting  
86 concentrations ( $\mu\text{g L}^{-1}$  and  $\text{ng L}^{-1}$ ) sampled from wastewater has been investigated (Thiebault  
87 et al., 2016a), no similar experiments have been performed onto organoclays where the  
88 reactivities of the hybrid materials to PPs need to be determined for any possible uses or  
89 applications in water remediation strategies.

90 In the light of the well-known adsorption efficiency of organoclays to pharmaceuticals, this  
91 study aims for the first time at our knowledge at both evaluating and understanding the  
92 adsorption of some pharmaceuticals sampled from a wastewater treatment facility (lagoon  
93 based system in a rural community: the town of Josnes, located in the department of Loir-et-  
94 Cher in the region of Centre-Val de Loire in France) onto organoclays. These hybrid layered  
95 materials were prepared by benzyldimethyltetradecylammonium cationic (BDTA) and

96 polyoxyethylene (20) oleyl ether (Brij-O20) nonionic surfactants. The efficiency of the  
97 studied organoclays for the removal of PPs was studied by UHPLC/MRM MS and compared  
98 to an untreated montmorillonite. This present study addresses also the interests of organoclays  
99 in complement of lagoon-based system potential for a complete removal of PPs.

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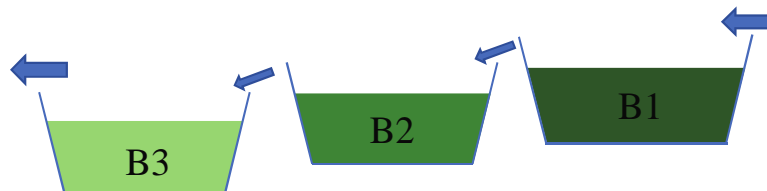


## 101 2. Materials and Methods

102

### 103 2.1. Origin of the samples

104 The samples of contaminated water of PPs were taken from the lagoon-based wastewater  
105 treatment plant of the town of Josnes, located in the department of Loir-et-Cher in the region  
106 of Centre-Val de Loire (France). The wastewater treatment plant, set up in 1991, deals with  
107 the waste/discharge of a population estimated at 893 people in 2015 (INSEE) of which 23.7%  
108 of them are older than 60 years old and thus are subject to consume PPs.



109

110 Figure 1: Lagoon-based system (with a schematic representation of its functioning) as  
111 wastewater treatment plant of the town of Josnes located in the Region Centre in France.

112 The rural wastewater treatment lagoon consists to a succession of three tanks before water  
113 being released into the environment (Figure 1). The first one (B1) is aerated and combines a  
114 decantation step for heavy particles while the others (B2 and B3) are simple tanks without any  
115 aeration. The lagoon-based system is therefore a succession of three basins in which different  
116 types of algae and processions bacteria favour and contribute to the degradation of organic  
117 molecules. While showing the advantage of being less expensive than other conventional  
118 treatment plants, one of the main inconvenient of the lagoon-based system concerns the  
119 continuous release of algae and bacteria in effluents.

## 120 2.2. Sampling and samples preparation

121 A sampling campaign was conducted on January 30, 2018. Two sampling points were  
122 selected, a first sample taken in the first basin B1 (Figure 1) and a second at the exit of the  
123 wastewater treatment (after the third tank B3). A total of 20 liters of sewage water were  
124 collected at both points for the adsorption experiments. In situ pH and conductivity  
125 measurements were done during the collection of the samples.

126 Solutions were first 0.22  $\mu\text{m}$  filtered for the removal of microorganisms that may degrade the  
127 pharmaceutical substances and solid particles that can adsorb molecules. Then a concentration  
128 procedure by solid phase extraction (SPE) was achieved prior any UHPLC/MRM MS  
129 analyses and after interaction with sorbents. This step was necessary to concentrate the  
130 molecules in the solution in order to amplify their signal and to be above the limit of detection  
131 of several spectroscopic techniques (De Oliveira and Guégan, 2016; Thiebault et al., 2016a;  
132 Thiebault et al., 2016b; De Oliveira et al., 2017; Guégan et al., 2020).

## 133 2.3. Adsorbents

134 Wyoming sodium montmorillonite (Mt), obtained from the Source Clay Minerals Repository,  
135 University of Missouri (Columbia, MO) was used in this study as a starting material. The

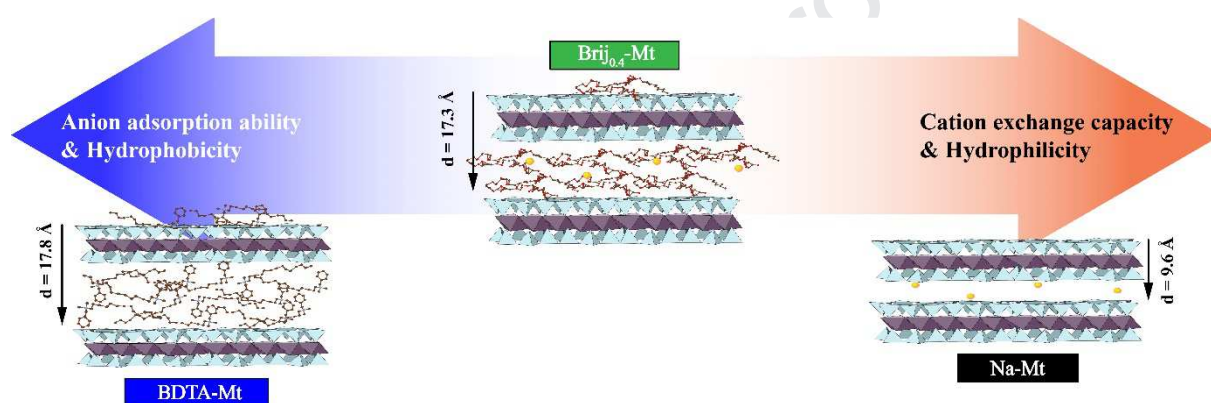
136 structural formula can be expressed as:  $(Ca_{0,12} Na_{0,32} K_{0,05})[Al_{3,01} Fe(III)_{0,41} Mn_{0,01} Mg_{0,54}$   
137  $Ti_{0,02}][Si_{7,98} Al_{0,02}]O_{20}(OH)_4$ . Mt was fractionated to  $< 2 \mu m$  by gravity sedimentation, purified  
138 and  $Na^+$  exchanged. This Na-Mt clay mineral shows a cation exchange capacity (CEC) of  
139 76.4 meq per 100 g clay.

140 The preparation of the organoclays is well described in the literature and consists in the  
141 chemical modification of Na-Mt by surfactants (BDTA and Brij-O20). Both  
142 benzyldimethyltetradecylammonium (BDTA) and polyoxyethylene (20) oleyl ether (Brij-  
143 O20) surfactants which were supplied from Sigma Aldrich Chemical. The cationic surfactant  
144 (BDTA) of which chemical formula is:  $CH_3(CH_2)_{13}N(Cl)(CH_3)_2CH_2C_6H_5$ , has a molar mass  
145 of  $368.04 \text{ g mol}^{-1}$ , and was conventionally used as organic modifier for the preparation of  
146 cationic organoclays. Brij-O20 ( $C_{18}H_{35}(OCH_2CH_2)_{20}OH$ ) nonionic surfactant, has high molar  
147 mass of  $1150 \text{ g mol}^{-1}$ , characterized a CMC of  $25 \mu M$  and a Hydrophilic-Lipophilic Balance  
148 (HLB) of 15.3 over 20. BDTA-Mt cationic organoclay was prepared by mixing (at 300 rpm  
149 for 24 h, at  $25^\circ C$ ) aqueous solutions of BDTA surfactant at a concentration of 1 CEC and Na-  
150 Mt suspensions which was stoichiometrically intercalated and exchanged with the  $Na^+$  cations  
151 located within the interlayer space. In contrast, Brij-O20 surfactants, prepared at  $25^\circ C$  and at  
152 a concentration  $1.13 \times 10^{-3} \text{ mol L}^{-1}$ , keep the  $Na^+$  cations in the layered structure of the hybrid  
153 materials (Brij<sub>0,4</sub>-Mt) and are adsorbed through ion-dipole interaction. Organoclays were  
154 prepared based on previous studies of the group when the concentrations of the surfactants  
155 was investigated and improved for a high adsorption efficiency for several PP molecules (De  
156 Oliveira et al., 2017; Guégan, 2019).

157 The BDTA-Mt and Brij<sub>0,4</sub>-Mt organoclays were intensively characterized by complementary  
158 techniques and the data were published elsewhere (De Oliveira and Guégan, 2016; De  
159 Oliveira et al., 2017; De Oliveira et al., 2018; Guégan, 2019; Guégan et al., 2020). In contrast  
160 to Na-Mt showing a hydrophilic character, the organoclays with the intercalation of

161 surfactants in a lateral bilayer arrangement, display a hydrophobic behaviour with a wide  
 162 expansion of the interlayer space (Figure 2). By keeping the  $\text{Na}^+$  cations and the HLB value of  
 163 a Brij-O20, Brij<sub>0.4</sub>-Mt display a dual hydrophilicity/hydrophobicity behaviour with still the  
 164 possibility to exchange the  $\text{Na}^+$  cations (30% of them) for further adsorption. BDTA-Mt with  
 165 a slight excess of organic cations display an organophilic behavior with the ability to adsorb  
 166 some anion (De Oliveira and Guégan, 2016; De Oliveira et al., 2017; De Oliveira et al., 2018;  
 167 Guégan, 2019; Guégan et al., 2020).

168



169

170 Figure 2: Schematic representation of the different adsorbents with a lateral bilayer  
 171 arrangement of the surfactants expanding the interlayer space at large value in contrast to the  
 172 starting Na-Mt. Na-Mt shows a cation exchange capacity and hydrophilic character. BDTA-  
 173 Mt shows an ability to adsorb anion species and hydrophobicity properties, and Brij<sub>0.4</sub>-Mt  
 174 display a dual hydrophilic-hydrophobic behaviour through the presence of the whole  
 175 compensating  $\text{Na}^+$  cations and the non-ionic surfactant (De Oliveira et al., 2018; Guégan,  
 176 2019; Guégan et al., 2020) .

#### 177 2.4. Experimental techniques

178 Chromatographic separation was achieved with an Ultimate 3000 RSLC (Thermo Fisher  
 179 Scientific Inc., CA, USA) liquid chromatography system equipped with a binary pump and a

180 Nucleodur C18 Gravity column (150 mm × 2 mm ; 1.8 μm, Macherey-Nagel) supplemented  
181 by a guard column. Separation was performed at a flow rate of 0.4 mL min<sup>-1</sup> and the  
182 temperature was maintained at 30 °C. Two solvents were used as mobile phase: ultrapure  
183 water (solvent A) and ACN (solvent B) both acidified with 0.1% of formic acid. The elution  
184 gradient was a transition from 95% to 5% of A in 16.2 min followed by 3.3 min of 100% of B  
185 and then a return to the initial conditions (95% of A) during 10 min for a total analysis time of  
186 29 min. The chromatography system was coupled to a TSQ Endura triple quadrupole mass  
187 spectrometer equipped with a heated electrospray ionization (H-ESI) interface (Thermo  
188 Scientific Inc., San Jose, CA, USA). The concentration of pharmaceuticals products before  
189 and after being in contact with the adsorbents: clay mineral and organoclays was performed  
190 by UHPLC/MRM MS with an electrospray ionization source operating in positive mode, with  
191 an electrospray voltage of 3600 V, a vaporizer temperature of 450 °C, ion transfer  
192 temperature of 325 °C, sheath gas of 50 Arb, auxiliary gas of 20 Arb, and sweep gas of 1 Arb.

### 193 2.5. Adsorption of pharmaceuticals products

194 A total of thirty pharmaceuticals molecules of particular interest were pre-selected as target  
195 substances for the adsorption experiments with Na-Mt, BDTA-Mt and Brij<sub>0,4</sub>-Mt due to their  
196 high consumption level by the population, their low global removal rate by wastewater  
197 treatment, as well as their high occurrence in the environmental aquatic medium as previously  
198 discuss and their proven toxicity for organism. Only twelve out of the total of thirty PPs were  
199 selected due to their easier detection in the wastewater. The selected molecules were: atenolol,  
200 codeine, doxepin, metoprolol, trimethoprim, oxazepam, carbamazepine, sulfamethoxazole,  
201 bezafibrate, diclofenac, salicylic acid and ibuprofen. At the pH of the wastewater (pH=7.8),  
202 PPs display three different major electrical form according to their pKa (Table 1). Atenolol,  
203 codeine, doxepin and metoprolol are in their cationic form whereas trimethoprim, oxazepam  
204 and carbamazepine are neutral and sulfamethoxazole, bezafibrate, diclofenac, salicylic acid

205 and ibuprofen are mainly anionic. The other characteristics: Log P, solubility in water of the  
 206 PPs are listed in the Table 1.

207 Table 1: Physicochemical properties of the selected 12 PPs

Major electrical form at a pH of 7.8	PPs	Weight (g mol <sup>-1</sup> )	Solubility (mg L <sup>-1</sup> )	Chemical formula	Log P	pK <sub>a</sub>
<b>Cationic</b>	Atenolol	266.3	1.33 x 10 <sup>4</sup>	C <sub>14</sub> H <sub>22</sub> N <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	0.57	9.67/14.08
	Codeine	299.4	9.00 x 10 <sup>3</sup>	C <sub>18</sub> H <sub>21</sub> NO <sub>3</sub>	1.2	9.19/13.78
	Doxepin	279.4	3.19 x 10 <sup>1</sup>	C <sub>19</sub> H <sub>21</sub> NO	4.29	9.76
	Metoprolol	267,4	1.69 x 10 <sup>4</sup>	C <sub>15</sub> H <sub>25</sub> NO <sub>3</sub>	1.88	9.67/14.09
<b>Neutral</b>	Trimethoprim	290,4	4.00 x 10 <sup>2</sup>	C <sub>14</sub> H <sub>18</sub> N <sub>4</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	0.91	7.16/17.33
	Oxazepam	286.7	1.79 x 10 <sup>2</sup>	C <sub>15</sub> H <sub>11</sub> ClN <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	2.01	-1.5/10.61
	Carbamazepine	236,2	1.77 x 10 <sup>1</sup>	C <sub>15</sub> H <sub>12</sub> N <sub>2</sub> O	2.45	-3.8/15.96
<b>Anionic</b>	Sulfamethoxazole	253,2	6.10 x 10 <sup>2</sup>	C <sub>10</sub> H <sub>11</sub> N <sub>3</sub> O <sub>3</sub> S	0.89	1.97/6.16
	Bezafibrate	361.8	1.55 x 10 <sup>0</sup>	C <sub>19</sub> H <sub>20</sub> ClNO <sub>4</sub>	3.97	0.84/3.83
	Diclofenac	296,1	2.37 x 10 <sup>0</sup>	C <sub>14</sub> H <sub>11</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub> NO <sub>2</sub>	4.51	-2.1/4.15
	Salicylic acid	138.1	2.24 x 10 <sup>3</sup>	C <sub>7</sub> H <sub>6</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	1.96	-6.3/2.79
	Ibuprofen	206.3	2.10 x 10 <sup>1</sup>	C <sub>13</sub> H <sub>18</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	3.5	4.85

208

209 Batch adsorption experiments were conducted at ambient temperature (25°C) with a solid-to-  
 210 liquid ratio constant of 2:1 (100 mg of adsorbent and 50 mL of solution), and at a similar pH  
 211 to that of the field of 7.8 with the use of NaOH and HCl solutions at 1 mol L<sup>-1</sup> each. Samples  
 212 were shaken on a rotary shaker at 300 rpm during 24 h in order to reach the equilibrium and  
 213 then centrifuged at 5000 rpm for 25 min. Both supernatants and adsorbents after being in  
 214 contact with the solution were extracted and analysed through UHPLC/MRM MS. The  
 215 removal percentage (% R) and amount of each adsorbed pharmaceuticals at time t (q<sub>t</sub>, mol g<sup>-1</sup>)  
 216 was calculated by the difference between the initial and equilibrium concentrations following  
 217 the equations 1 and 2 respectively.

218

$$\% R = \frac{(C_0 - C_t)}{C_0} \times 100 \quad (1)$$

$$q_t = \left( \frac{(C_0 - C_t) \times V}{m} \right) \times \frac{1}{M} \quad (2)$$

219

220 where  $C_0$  and  $C_t$  ( $\text{g L}^{-1}$ ) are respectively the initial and equilibrium concentrations of PP at a  
221 time  $t = 24\text{h}$ ,  $m$  is the amount of sorbent (g),  $V$  the volume of the solution (L) and  $M$  the  
222 molar mass of the PP ( $\text{g mol}^{-1}$ ).

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## 224 **3. Results**

### 225 3.1. Determination of the initial concentration of PPs

226 The concentration of the 12 selected pharmaceuticals of the two collected samples is shown in  
227 Table 2. From the selected PPs, salicylic acid and ibuprofen, in a first basin, show  
228 concentration of about 4.74 and 11.07  $\mu\text{g L}^{-1}$  respectively and their preponderance can be  
229 explained by a large consumption of these nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory PPs by the  
230 population of Josnes. Besides a large concentration of these two PPs in a first basin, the  
231 lagoon-based system displays a certain efficiency with a removal reaching 88-93%,  
232 underlining here the impact of biodegradation and photodegradation processes, leading to a  
233 release at concentration of about 300-4000  $\text{ng L}^{-1}$  in an effluent (at the exit of the third basin).  
234 However, for other molecules such as oxazepam, trimethoprim and doxepin, the wastewater  
235 treatment show its limits with a poor degradation, nor removal of the PPs with removal rates  
236 of only 1-15%. Surprisingly, a negative removal was determined in the case of carbamazepine  
237 and was already observed in previous studies (Andreozzi et al., 2002; Andreozzi et al., 2003)  
238 and can be explained by (i) the difference of the residence times between the first basin and at  
239 the exit of the third one, (ii) the recalcitrance of PPs, and (iii) a possible combination or  
240 formation of PPs through depredated products (Verlicchi and Zambello, 2014). If one  
241 excludes carbamazepine, the average value for the removal of the whole PPs reaches 38.24 %  
242 with a release of the PPs at concentration above 100  $\text{ng L}^{-1}$ , pointing out a moderate overall  
243 elimination performance for PPs (selected in this studied) of the wastewater treatment based  
244 on the lagoon system.

245

246

247



248 Table 2: Measured concentration (in  $\text{ng L}^{-1}$ ) of the 12 PPs detected in the first basin and in the  
 249 effluent of the wastewater treatment lagoon. Removal rate (%) are calculated between the two  
 250 selected sampling points. (+) PP under cationic form, (0) PP under neutral form and (-) PP  
 251 under anionic form at pH of 7.8

PPs (electrical charge)	1 <sup>st</sup> basin	Effluent	Removal (%)
Atenolol (+)	$2077.8 \pm 37$	$1083.2 \pm 132$	47.86
Codeine (+)	$966.4 \pm 44$	$360.9 \pm 99$	62.65
Doxepin (+)	$684.0 \pm 220$	$590.4 \pm 150$	13.68
Metoprolol (+)	$812.3 \pm 111$	$485.2 \pm 26$	40.26
Trimethoprim (0)	$867.9 \pm 53$	$845.3 \pm 81$	2.60
Oxazepam (0)	$388.2 \pm 54$	$381.5 \pm 12$	1.72
Carbamazepine (0)	$82.8 \pm 17$	$171.5 \pm 55$	-107.12
Sulfamethoxazole (-)	$1366.0 \pm 69$	$1170.7 \pm 68$	14.29
Bezafibrate (-)	$1788.5 \pm 218$	$1316.7 \pm 85$	26.37
Diclofenac (-)	$2242.9 \pm 96$	$1585.5 \pm 139$	29.31
Salicylic acid (-)	$4746.6 \pm 222$	$315.2 \pm 189$	93.35
Ibuprofen (-)	$11027.5 \pm 149$	$1260.2 \pm 33$	88.57

252

### 253 3.2. Adsorption onto the adsorbents

254 The results ( $q_t$  and % R) of the adsorption experiments from wastewater solutions and for the  
 255 three selected adsorbents are listed in tables for the first basin (Table 3) and for the effluents  
 256 (Table 4). The  $q_t$  values for Na-Mt after being in contact with a solution collected from the  
 257 first basin spread out from  $2.89 \times 10^{-11}$  to  $1.65 \times 10^{-8}$   $\text{mol g}^{-1}$  for carbamazepine and salicylic  
 258 acid, respectively. While not being present in the same initial concentrations, the adsorption  
 259 rate related to the molecules are not correlated to their adsorbed amounts. Bezafibrate and  
 260 salicylic acid represent the minimum and maximum values of the %R which is calculated at  
 261 5.94% and 96.25%. The total adsorbed amount is estimated at  $3.51 \times 10^{-8}$   $\text{mol g}^{-1}$  for a

262 removal average of 43.65%. For BDTA-Mt, the adsorbed amount values are between  $1.01 \times 10^{-10}$  and  $2.48 \times 10^{-8} \text{ mol g}^{-1}$  respectively for carbamazepine and ibuprofen. The adsorption  
263 rate is between 9.45% and greater than 99% respectively for codeine and diclofenac, with a  
264 total of  $5.30 \times 10^{-8} \text{ mol g}^{-1}$  and an average of 66.38%. For Brij<sub>0.4</sub>-Mt,  $q_t$  values are between  
265  $1.50 \times 10^{-10}$  and  $1.70 \times 10^{-8} \text{ mol g}^{-1}$  for carbamazepine and salicylic acid. The adsorption rate  
266 spreads out from 24.42% and 98.80% for bezafibrate and salicylic acid and the total amount  
267 adsorbed is  $4.08 \times 10^{-8} \text{ mol g}^{-1}$  for an average of 67.02%.

269 Since the PPs do not evolve in the same way to the wastewater treatment, some of them were  
270 preferentially degraded while others are less altered. Thus, it leads to different molecular  
271 proportions that totally vary from one sampling point to another and consequently affects the  
272 results of the interactions between the adsorbents and the analytes with those different initial  
273 conditions. Na-Mt shows for the effluents some adsorbed amounts ranging from  $9.49 \times 10^{-11}$   
274 to  $9.49 \times 10^{-10} \text{ mol g}^{-1}$  related to codeine and doxepin molecules respectively. The minimum  
275 adsorption rate is 10.36% for sulfamethoxazole and maximum for doxepin with 89.67%.  
276 BDTA-Mt shows  $q_t$  values ranging from  $8.15 \times 10^{-11}$  to  $2.70 \times 10^{-9} \text{ mol g}^{-1}$  for codeine and  
277 diclofenac. These molecules also correspond to the minimum and maximum adsorption rates  
278 of 13.53% and more than 99% respectively. Values for Brij<sub>0.4</sub>-Mt are between  $3.47 \times 10^{-10}$  and  
279  $1.74 \times 10^{-9} \text{ mol g}^{-1}$  for the carbamazepine and sulfamethoxazole molecules. The adsorption  
280 rate is between 33.52% and 95.48% for bezafibrate and carbamazepine. The total amounts  
281 adsorbed are about  $6.17 \times 10^{-9}$ ,  $1.30 \times 10^{-8}$  and  $1.07 \times 10^{-8} \text{ mol g}^{-1}$ , representing an average  
282 adsorption percentage of 40.56%, 68.82% and 65.47% for Na-Mt, BDTA-Mt and Brij<sub>0.4</sub>-Mt  
283 respectively.

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285

286 Table 3: Adsorbed amount  $q_t$  (mol g<sup>-1</sup>) and removal percentage (%R) of 12 PPs detected in the  
 287 first basin of the wastewater treatment lagoon for the starting clay material (Na-Mt), the  
 288 cationic (BDTA-Mt) and the non-ionic (Bij<sub>0.4</sub>-Mt) organoclays. (+) PP under cationic form,  
 289 (0) PP under neutral form and (-) PP under anionic form at pH of 7.8

PPs (electrical charge)	Na-Mt		BDTA-Mt		Brij <sub>0.4</sub> -Mt	
	$q_t$ (mol g <sup>-1</sup> )	%R	$q_t$ (mol g <sup>-1</sup> )	%R	$q_t$ (mol g <sup>-1</sup> )	%R
Atenolol (+)	$2.03 \times 10^{-9}$ ± 0.06	51.98	$4.97 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.46	12.74	$2.32 \times 10^{-9}$ ± 0.58	59.38
Codeine (+)	$8.14 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.98	58.15	$1.32 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 1.06	9.45	$1.17 \times 10^{-9}$ ± 0.07	83.8
Doxepin (+)	$1.11 \times 10^{-9}$ ± 0.29	90.44	$8.81 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.12	72.00	$1.12 \times 10^{-9}$ ± 0.01	91.82
Metoprolol (+)	$8.50 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 1.11	55.94	$7.78 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.80	51.22	$1.20 \times 10^{-9}$ ± 0.30	79.16
Trimethoprim (0)	$1.01 \times 10^{-9}$ ± 0.02	67.84	$7.31 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 1.13	48.88	$1.39 \times 10^{-9}$ ± 0.22	92.74
Oxazepam (0)	$1.17 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.23	17.21	$5.55 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.06	81.99	$3.32 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.47	48.98
Carbamazepine (0)	$2.89 \times 10^{-11}$ ± 1.58	16.48	$1.01 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.10	57.52	$1.50 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 1.72	85.62
Sulfamethoxazole (-)	$2.25 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.89	8.36	$2.14 \times 10^{-9} \pm$ 0.04	79.18	$1.73 \times 10^{-9}$ ± 0.34	64.16
Bezafibrate (-)	$1.47 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 1.10	5.94	$2.41 \times 10^{-9} \pm$ 0.01	97.71	$6.04 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 3.38	24.42
Diclofenac (-)	$4.16 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.92	11.00	$3.81 \times 10^{-9} \pm$ 0.02	>99	$1.05 \times 10^{-9}$ ± 0.13	27.71
Salicylic acid (-)	$1.65 \times 10^{-8}$ ± 0.004	96.25	$1.62 \times 10^{-8} \pm$ 0.009	94.20	$1.70 \times 10^{-8}$ ± 0.05	98.80
Ibuprofen (-)	$1.18 \times 10^{-8}$ ± 0.005	44.22	$2.48 \times 10^{-8} \pm$ 0.02	92.74	$1.27 \times 10^{-8}$ ± 0.17	47.64

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293 Table 4: Adsorbed amount  $q_t$  (mol g<sup>-1</sup>) and removal percentage (%R) of 12 PPs detected in the  
 294 effluent of the wastewater treatment lagoon for the starting clay material (Na-Mt), the cationic  
 295 (BDTA-Mt) and the non-ionic (Bij<sub>0.4</sub>-Mt) organoclays. (+) PP under cationic form, (0) PP  
 296 under neutral form and (-) PP under anionic form at pH of 7.8

PPs (electrical charge)	Na-Mt		BDTA-Mt		Brij <sub>0.4</sub> -Mt	
	$q_t$ (mol g <sup>-1</sup> )	%R	$q_t$ (mol g <sup>-1</sup> )	%R	$q_t$ (mol g <sup>-1</sup> )	%R
Atenolol (+)	$5.85 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.40	28.75	$2.50 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.23	12.28	$1.16 \times 10^{-9}$ ± 0.14	57.23
Codeine (+)	$9.49 \times 10^{-11}$ ± 5.73	15.75	$8.15 \times 10^{-11}$ ± 3.40	13.53	$5.23 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.22	86.80
Doxepin (+)	$9.49 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 1.40	89.67	$7.64 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 1.00	72.34	$1.02 \times 10^{-9}$ ± 0.05	96.44
Metoprolol (+)	$6.81 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 1.24	75.00	$6.14 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 3.75	67.62	$5.49 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.72	60.56
Trimethoprim (0)	$9.48 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.15	65.12	$7.21 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 2.54	49.54	$1.26 \times 10^{-9}$ ± 0.07	86.63
Oxazepam (0)	$1.51 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 1.73	22.68	$5.01 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.17	75.25	$3.77 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.46	56.67
Carbamazepine (0)	$2.05 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.64	56.38	$2.82 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.51	77.65	$3.47 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.17	95.48
Sulfamethoxazole (-)	$2.40 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.19	10.36	$2.09 \times 10^{-9}$ ± 0.11	90.46	$1.74 \times 10^{-9}$ ± 0.09	75.39
Bezafibrate (-)	$2.56 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.41	14.09	$1.76 \times 10^{-9}$ ± 0.02	96.46	$5.92 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 2.07	32.52
Diclofenac (-)	$6.38 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 6.71	23.82	$2.70 \times 10^{-9}$ ± 0.05	>99	$1.07 \times 10^{-9}$ ± 0.11	40.13
Salicylic acid (-)	$6.99 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.55	61.22	$7.26 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 4.64	90.51	$1.03 \times 10^{-9}$ ± 0.04	63.64
Ibuprofen (-)	$7.28 \times 10^{-10}$ ± 0.99	23.84	$2.48 \times 10^{-9}$ ± 0.02	81.24	$1.04 \times 10^{-9}$ ± 0.008	34.14

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298

## 299 **4. Discussion**

### 300 *4.1. First basin solution interaction*

301 The electrical charge of PPs was recognized to be one of the key parameters in the adsorption,  
302 as well as the zeta potential of adsorbents. At a pH of wastewater in the lagoon (pH=7.8), only  
303 atenolol, codeine, doxepin and metoprolol are organic cations. Based on the pKa values of the  
304 other PPs, trimethoprim, oxazepam and carbamazepine are neutral, while sulfamethoxazole,  
305 bezafibrate, diclofenac, salicylic acid and ibuprofen are organic anions. The impact of the  
306 electrical charge of PPs (and the long ranged electrostatic interaction) has been pointed out to  
307 be one of the major parameters for the adsorption onto montmorillonite and their organoclay  
308 derivatives (De Oliveira et al., 2018). If we exclude salicylic acid and ibuprofen (due to an  
309 order of magnitude of concentration higher than the other molecules for the first sampling  
310 point), the adsorbed amounts for Na-Mt highlight its affinity for protonated molecules.  
311 Atenolol, codeine, doxepin and metoprolol as well as trimethoprim with positive functional  
312 groups, are preferentially adsorbed compared to neutral molecules such as carbamazepine or  
313 anions such as bezafibrate, sulfamethoxazole or diclofenac. This trend is also confirmed with  
314 the mean value of sorption for the cationic PPs (i.e. atenolol, codeine, doxepin and  
315 metoprolol) which reaches 64.13% while for the anionic PPs (bezafibrate, sulfamethoxazole  
316 and diclofenac) the value falls down to about only 8.43 % and 33.84 % for neutral PPs  
317 (trimethoprim, oxazepam and carbamazepine). This supports the establishment of cationic  
318 exchanges between the inorganic cations of Na-Mt and the amine moieties of the cationic  
319 molecules (Bekçi et al., 2006; Thiebault et al., 2016a; Thiebault et al., 2016b). Also, it  
320 suggests surface complexation with donor-acceptor electron between negatively charged site  
321 (aluminol and silanol groups located on the edges of Na-Mt) and protonated groups of  
322 pharmaceutical substances as interactional mechanisms (Gao et al., 2008).

323 The large adsorption of anionic substances such as salicylic acid and ibuprofen onto Na-Mt  
324 can be explained by the large concentrations of PPs in the collected wastewater samples.  
325 Indeed, salicylic acid and ibuprofen are respectively quantified at  $4.7 \mu\text{g L}^{-1}$  and  $11 \mu\text{g L}^{-1}$ ,  
326 which induces a concentration gradient or flux favourable to the adsorption of these molecules  
327 at the expense of the others PPs. In addition, with surface complexation process or cations  
328 exchanges involved, organic cations are first adsorbed forming an organic brush or coating  
329 likely to screen up the repulsion forces and allows adsorption of anionic PPs through other  
330 molecular interactions as similar as organoclays (i.e. enhancing the adsorption efficiency  
331 through intercalation of organic molecules). Moreover, with a conductivity of  $1193 \mu\text{S cm}^{-1}$  in  
332 the wastewater, it is not excluded that an association or the formation of organic complexes  
333 between PPs occur and favour the adsorption of PP anions.

334 Brij<sub>0.4</sub>-Mt displays similar interactional mechanisms as Na-Mt and the adsorption of the  
335 cationic substances appears quite favourable. However, the introduction of non-ionic  
336 surfactant in the interlayer spacing confers enhanced adsorption properties than the raw clay  
337 mineral (Van der Waals and the hydrogen bonding interaction). The sorption of PPs occurs at  
338 larger amounts than Na-Mt, in particular for the neutral (i.e. carbamazepine) and anionic  
339 compounds (i.e. sulfamethoxazole, bezafibrate, diclofenac, salicylic acid and ibuprofen).  
340 Brij<sub>0.4</sub>-Mt appears more efficient in the adsorption of cationic, zwitterionic and neutral  
341 substances than both Na-Mt and BDTA-Mt. The mean sorption value for the cationic PPs is  
342 78.54% while for the anionic PPs the value is 52.55 % and 75.78 % for neutral PPs.

343 BDTA-Mt adsorbs better anionic PPs than cationic ones by setting up electrostatic  
344 interactions between the organic ions of the surfactant (alkyl ammonium ion) and the  
345 deprotonated functional groups (i.e. acidic groups -COOH) of molecules such as diclofenac or  
346 salicylic acid. This affinity allows BDTA-Mt to have a higher total adsorbed amount than the  
347 two other adsorbents since the majority of the molecules at high concentration are in an

348 anionic form. The mean sorption value for the cationic PPs is only 36.35% while for the  
349 anionic PPs the value is 95.57% and 62.80% for neutral PPs.

350 The efficiency of the layered materials for the removal of the PPs matched those of our  
351 previous studies (De Oliveira et al., 2018, Guegan et al., 2020) with the use of 'synthetic  
352 waters' or experimental conditions quite distant from wastewater conditions. Indeed, in  
353 synthetic waters, important parameters affecting the adsorption such as the ionic strength,  
354 temperature, concentration of PPs could be finely controlled allowed us to determine precisely  
355 equilibrium isotherms and to discriminate the main interactional mechanism. From these  
356 previous works, it appeared that the main driving force for the adsorption was principally  
357 electrostatic and other aspects (hydrogen bonding or Van der Waals interaction) played a  
358 minor role in the adsorption of PPs. In wastewaters, multiple effects occur with possible  
359 competition among PPs and other compounds or possible different kinetics of adsorption with  
360 prior adsorption of some chemicals leading to a change of the zeta potential of the adsorbents  
361 as well as their chemical nature. Thus, despite its main negative charge, ibuprofen can be  
362 adsorbed onto Na-Mt by a high concentration gradient compared to other compounds and  
363 certainly due to a possible prior adsorption of other compounds bearing a positive charge  
364 allowing a surface complexation of a pharmaceutical. However, the overall affinity  
365 adsorbents-PPs is still respected with our previous observations in synthetic water  
366 experimental conditions. Ibuprofen, which is mainly in its deprotonated form, shows a higher  
367 adsorbed amount and removal rate with the use of cationic organoclay BDTA-Mt. The  
368 removal rate falls with Brij<sub>0,4</sub>-Mt and appears minimum with Na-Mt. Also, doxepin is  
369 principally adsorbed onto Brij<sub>0,4</sub>-Mt, followed by Na-Mt but can be also be retained by  
370 BDTA-Mt due to the neutral behavior of a pharmaceutical at a pH of 7.8 that limits the  
371 repulsive forces with the surface of the layered material.

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374 *4.2. Effluent wastewater solution interaction*

375 The results of the adsorption experiments from the effluent highlight for the first time the  
376 capacity of organoclays to adsorb, by UHPLC/MRM MS, PPs from wastewater collected in a  
377 lagoon system at concentration range of  $\text{ng L}^{-1}$ .

378 Nevertheless, results are more difficult to interpret for both Na-Mt and Brij<sub>0.4</sub>-Mt in regards to  
379 the adsorbed amount of each PPs. No clear trend seems to emerge as to the affinities between  
380 molecules and adsorbent. The mean adsorbed amount for cationic and anionic PPs onto Na-  
381 Mt are respectively of  $5.77 \times 10^{-10} \text{ mol g}^{-1}$  and  $5.12 \times 10^{-10} \text{ mol g}^{-1}$  while for the Brij<sub>0.4</sub>-Mt, the  
382 mean adsorbed amount for cationic and anionic PPs are respectively of  $8.13 \times 10^{-10} \text{ mol g}^{-1}$   
383 and  $1.09 \times 10^{-9} \text{ mol g}^{-1}$ . Cationic PPs are preferentially adsorbed onto Na-Mt and Brij<sub>0.4</sub>-Mt  
384 through cation exchange and surface complexation. Nevertheless, the total adsorbed amount  
385 of cationic PPs is slightly equal to that of anionic ones for which repulsive forces exist.  
386 However, due to their large flux and large concentration, anionic compounds could be  
387 adsorbed. BDTA-Mt seems to be the optimum adsorbent for the removal of anionic PPs.

388 The anionic molecules such as sulfamethoxazole, bezafibrate, diclofenac, salicylic acid and  
389 ibuprofen have an average half-life time (half-life times of PPs either under photodegradation  
390 condition or in soil) shorter than the cationic molecules atenolol, codeine, doxepin and  
391 metoprolol (Andreozzi et al., 2003; Kodešová et al., 2016). Thus, anionic PPs may be subject  
392 to be removed or degraded by the wastewater treatment of Josnes than the cationic ones which  
393 is confirmed by the calculated %R. Indeed, the anionic molecules are removed up to 50.38%  
394 against 41.11% for the cationic molecules. Nevertheless, these anionic species remained at  
395 high concentration even in the effluent.



396 The results about the wastewater treatment system emphasize that neutral molecules such as  
397 oxazepam and carbamazepine are among the least well removed and adsorbed onto the  
398 layered materials. The absence of apparent charge associated with the possible competition  
399 among PPs for the adsorption sites of the sorbents may disadvantage an adsorption. In  
400 addition, their half-life time is much longer than previous PPs with values up to several days  
401 (Andreozzi et al., 2002; Calisto et al., 2011) which prevent a fast degradation within the  
402 wastewater treatment.

403

Journal Pre-proof

## 404 **5. Conclusions**

405 While Na-Mt appears as an efficient adsorbent to PPs, the use of organoclays display a certain  
406 versatility which improve the adsorption of the organic molecules. Indeed, the interests of  
407 organoclays bear on the possibility to adsorb a large range of molecules and especially those  
408 showing a poor affinity to clay minerals.

409 The collected wastewaters from the lagoon-based system in Josnes showed a pH relatively  
410 high (basic regime) and the concentrations of the pharmaceuticals spread out from 300 to  
411 12000 ng L<sup>-1</sup>. In those pH conditions, the PPs appeared mainly as organic species,  
412 emphasizing the interests of BDTA-Mt which appeared as the most efficient adsorbent for  
413 removal of the pharmaceuticals.

414 The selected wastewater treatment of the municipality of Josnes, based on a lagoon-type  
415 system, showed a limited over time removal process leading to the persistence of the  
416 pharmaceuticals in the aquatic network. One possible solution to improve the efficiency  
417 removal consists to use organoclays and even raw clay minerals as filters between the  
418 transition from the different lagoon basins. Indeed, through the experiments carried out,  
419 montmorillonite and its organoclay derivatives revealed a high potential for the removal of  
420 organic products with diverse physicochemical properties, suggesting a good efficiency in the  
421 adsorption of other types of micropollutants for an application shot. In order to characterize  
422 the overall efficiency of organoclays over time in a context of wastewater treatment, future  
423 research works should focus their efforts on both the influence of other physicochemical  
424 parameters such as inorganic ions that can generate a competitive effect among PPs and the  
425 degree of recycling and reuse of these layered hybrid materials via adsorption and desorption  
426 experiments.

427

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## Highlights

- Significant occurrence of pharmaceuticals (PPs) in a rural wastewater treatment facility
- Use of clay and organoclay as adsorbents for PPs showing different organic moieties
- Removal of PPs from a wastewater solution appears efficient at low concentration
- Electrostatic interaction seems to be the main driving force for PPs adsorption

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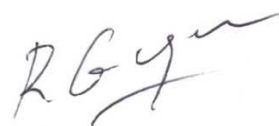
The 15<sup>th</sup> of June 2020

Object: declaration of the scientific contribution of the corresponding author

To whom it should be addressed,

I would like to first answer to the inquiry of the editor about the number of co-authors associated to this work, which I believe deserve to be co-authors of this work. This work is a part of a PhD study of Dr. Tiago De Oliveira whom I was the main scientific PhD supervisor (Dr. Mohammed Boussafir was more an administrative supervisor but partially participated in the supervision of Tiago De Oliveira). Tiago De Oliveira was my master student in 2015 at the University of Orleans in France when I was an associate professor (since 2007, I am now seconded employee from this university). The results of his master project allowed us to publish two papers (one in Journal of Hazardous Materials: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0304389416304204> and one in ES&T: <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/abs/10.1021/acs.est.6b03393> ) that I wrote completely the papers and thus was a corresponding author but Tiago was first author since it is the custom to put a student as a first author. Then, Tiago de Oliveira started his PhD in 2015, but in March 2018, I got a position as an associate professor at Waseda in Japan. For almost one year until the defence of a PhD of Tiago De Oliveira in March 2019, I supervised the work and the interpretation of the whole data of his PhD at distance and discussed also about the results of his PhD with Prof. Y. Sugahara. Prof. Sugahara is a specialist of layered materials and already participated in the writing of some papers of have been published already (ACS Omega 2018: <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/abs/10.1021/acsomega.8b02049> , Chemosphere 2020: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0045653519319605> ) based on the results of a PhD of Tiago De Oliveira. Some meetings involved the whole co-authors to discuss about the results of the work of Tiago De Oliveira. Finally, I would like to mention my contribution in this study that concerned the design of the experiments, the interpretation of the data, the writing of a manuscript (based on the work of Tiago De Oliveira and his PhD that I completely rewrote), but also the creation of some graphics in order to produce a work with the required criteria to be published in a journal such as Chemosphere.

Attached to the letter, the justification of the scientific contribution of the whole co-authors. Based on your experience, please feel free to consider the contribution of each co-authors and to judge if necessary, to keep them as co-authors or to remove some of them.



Sincerely,  
Régis Guégan

Dear Editor,

The study presented in the submitted manuscript is directly based my PhD research directed by Mohammed Boussafir and Régis Guégan at the University of Orléans in France. My contribution to the manuscript is total, starting to the conception of the experimental protocol, the execution of the experiments, the analysis of the samples, the interpretation of results and finishing with the writing of the reported manuscript. As my contribution on this research is major, I am legitimate to be cited as the main author of this scientific article which is based on my PhD research topic.

Tiago De Oliveira



Dear Professor Klaus Kümmerer  
Editor

My contribution to this work is manifold. First of all, I am the PhD supervisor of Tiago de Oliveira's work co-supervised by Dr Régis Guegan. I am also in charge of the scientific project that funded his research. With Pr. Régis Guegan, we supervised Tiago's work from experimentation to writing. I thus took part in all the stages of the realization of this scientific article.

Kind regards

Orléans, Jun 12, 2020



Dear editorial,

The results contained in Dr Guegan's manuscript entitled "Use of a clay mineral and its nonionic and cationic organoclay derivatives for the removal of pharmaceuticals from rural wastewater effluents" were obtained by UHPLC/MS MRM mode coupling analyzes. The entire method for quantifying the molecules presented in the article was developed at the Institute of Chemical Organic and Analytic (ICOA) by Dr Destandau and Dr Fougère. In addition, they advise Dr De-Oliveira to carry out the analysis sequences, discuss the results and the solve problems encountered. Our contribution to this research allows us to be present as co-author of this article.

Dr Destandau

Dr Fougère



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June 9, 2020

#### Declaration on scientific contribution

Dear Editor

I, Dr. Yoshiyuki SUGAHARA at Waseda University, participated in preparation of the manuscript entitled "Use of a clay mineral and its nonionic and cationic organoclay derivatives for the removal of pharmaceuticals from rural wastewater effluents". I discussed Prof. Guegan on the result interpretation based on my long research carrier on chemistry of layered compounds, since I and Prof. Guégan have been closely corroborated at Waseda University. I was also involved in writing manuscript partially. Based on my contribution to this research I am justified to be s co-author of this article.

Yoshiyuki SUGAHARA



Use of a clay mineral and its nonionic and cationic organoclay  
derivatives for the removal of pharmaceuticals from rural wastewater  
effluents

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**Declaration of interests**

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

The authors declare the following financial interests/personal relationships which may be considered as potential competing interests: