A Multi-Year Comparison of Spirolide Profiles in Planktonic Field Samples from the North Sea and Adjacent Waters

Introduction

Spirolides are „fast acting“ lipophilic cyclo imine toxins, which are produced by the marine dinoflagellate *Alexandrium ostenfeldii*. Most spirolides were identified in isolates from the North Sea, the Irish Sea, and the western Celtic Sea (HE 302, stns. 46-51). Spirolide A was barely detected in 2007 and 2008, in contrast to relatively high concentrations found in 2009 in the North Sea and western Scottish waters, but not along the Irish coast. There is no known source of spirolide A in Europe, but field surveys based upon LC-MS/MS profiling provide a plausible means of identifying new toxin sources and their biogeographical distribution.

20-Methyl G is the most abundant spirolide in the North Sea

*Alexandrium ostenfeldii* isolates from distinct geographical locations showed almost identical profiles, primarily consisting of 20-methyl spirolide G (20-meG). Whereas the Scottish isolate produces only this variant, the Irish isolate additionally yields slight amounts of 13-desmethyl spirolide C (13-desmeC). These profiles were also reflected in the field data, where 20-meG was the most abundant spirolide throughout all samples and years. Even though 13-desmeC was also detected in the North Sea, the highest 13-desmeC/20-meG ratios were found in the southern Irish and the western Celtic Sea (HE 302, stns. 46-51). Spirolide A was barely detected in 2007 and 2008, in contrast to relatively high concentrations found in 2009 in the North Sea and western Scottish waters, but not along the Irish coast. There is no known source of spirolide A in Europe, but field surveys based upon LC-MS/MS profiling provide a plausible means of identifying new toxin sources and their biogeographical distribution.

![Abundance of spirolides in the 20-50 µm size fraction of 20 m vertical net tows: A) FS Poseidon PO 356 cruise, June – July 2007; B) FK Ulthörn cruise, July 2008; C) FS Heincke HE 302 cruise, April – May 2009](image-url)

References:


Acknowledgments:

This work was financed by the HGF through the research programmes MARCOLPOLI and HABOBA. This study was supported by the EC under FP6-ENVIRONMENT CO2000 research project on HABs in Fjords and Coastal Embayments.