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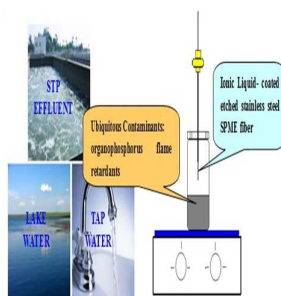


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An ionic liquid-coated etched stainless steel fiber was prepared for solid-phase microextraction of organophosphorus flame retardants from water.

1 Disposable ionic liquid-coated etched stainless steel fiber
2 for headspace solid-phase microextraction of
3 organophosphorus flame retardants from water samples

4

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8

9

10 **Abstract**

11 A simple and sensitive method for determining organophosphorus flame
12 retardants (PFRs) in water samples had been first developed based on headspace
13 solid-phase microextraction (HS-SPME) using an ionic liquid-coated etched stainless
14 steel (IL-ESS) fiber followed by gas chromatography-flame photometric detector
15 (GC-FPD). The etched stainless steel wire, whose rough and porous structure could
16 not only allow IL to be held properly but also load more IL, was used as the support
17 of the prepared fiber. The experiment results proved that the extraction capacity of the
18 proposed fiber was higher than that of other conventional disposable IL-based
19 coatings and the commercial SPME fibers. Parameters affecting the extraction
20 efficiency were investigated. Under the optimal extraction conditions, the linear range
21 of the proposed method was in the range of 10^{-5} – 10^4 ng L⁻¹. The reproducibility of

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22 fiber-to-fiber ($n=6$) was in the range of 3.9-8.2%. The method detection limits
23 (signal/noise=3) were in the range of 0.8-9.3 ng L⁻¹. The proposed method had been
24 successfully applied to the determination of PFRs in the real water samples with good
25 recoveries (78.2-105.8%) and low relative standard deviations (less than 7.7%). The
26 results demonstrate the proposed method was very attractive for the analysis of PFRs
27 in water.

28 **Key words:** Organophosphorus flame retardants; Etched stainless steel wire; Ionic
29 liquid; Headspace solid-phase microextraction.

30

31 **1. Introduction**

32 Organophosphorus flame retardants (PFRs) are widely used for several decades
33 as additives to flame retardants and plasticisers in a variety of products, including
34 plastics, foams, paints, textiles and furniture ¹. PFRs consumption may greatly
35 increase in future due to the restriction of some polybrominated diphenyl ethers
36 (PBDEs) ². Because PFRs are used as additives that are not chemically bonded with
37 the materials, PFRs can easily be released from materials to the surrounding
38 environment. PFRs have already been detected various environments ³⁻¹² and their
39 concentration in environment will subsequently rise with their growing usage ¹³.
40 Moreover, toxicological studies have shown that PFRs are toxic ^{14, 15}. It has been
41 reported triphenyl phosphate (TPHP) and tri-n-butyl phosphate (TNBP) could be
42 potent inhibitors of the human blood monocyte carboxyl esterase ¹⁵ and have
43 neurotoxic effects ¹⁴. Tri(2-chloroethyl) phosphate (TCEP) is carcinogenic ¹⁴ and

44 neurotoxic^{16, 17}. Tri(2-chloroisopropyl) phosphate (TCIPP) and tri(dichloropropyl)
45 phosphate (TDCIPP) are also suspected carcinogens¹⁴. The growing usage and
46 toxicity of PFRs have raised concern among authorities¹⁸, and the analysis of PFRs in
47 environmental media is therefore a hot topic for analytical research at present¹⁹⁻²¹.

48 Until now, a number of pretreatment techniques have attempted to extract PFRs
49 from water, such as liquid-liquid extraction (LLE)^{2, 22} and solid-phase extraction
50 (SPE)^{20, 21}. However, the application of LLE and SPE for extracting PFRs from water
51 has to suffer many drawbacks, such as time-consuming²³, labor-intensive and poor
52 recovery of TCEP (31% with RSD of 33%)⁵ or tri(2-ethylhexyl) phosphate (TEHP)
53 (not detected-51.8%)^{24, 25}. Solid-phase microextraction (SPME), introduced by
54 Pawliszyn²⁶, is recently considered to be an attractive alternative technique to these
55 conventional methods for extracting PFRs due to its simplicity and sensitivity²⁶. The
56 experimental result of Rodríguez et al.²⁶ proved that SPME was a valuable alternative
57 to SPE for the determination of PFRs in water and commercial
58 polydimethylsiloxane/divinylbenzene (PDMS/DVB) fiber was suitable for extracting
59 PFRs. Although commercial SPME fibers are widely applied, they are expensive and
60 fragile. Additionally, lot-to-lot variations of the fibers often result in relatively poor
61 extraction reproducibility²⁷. Moreover, they are still not suitable for extracting TEHP
62 with low recovery (26.7%) and unacceptable deviations (64.8%)²⁵.

63 Recently, ionic liquids (ILs) have been widely applied as coatings in SPME²⁸⁻⁴³,
64 owing to their fascinating properties including low volatility, good thermal stability
65 and excellent extraction capability for various organic compounds. Gao et al.¹⁸

66 prepared IL-coated SPME fiber by sol-gel technology for extracting PFRs. The
67 extraction capability of the prepared fiber was much higher than commercial SPME
68 fibers. Nevertheless, the main drawbacks of the IL-coated sol-gel fiber are the
69 tedious preparation procedure and the fragile fused-silica support, which needs special
70 care and attention during the using, handling, and/or storing of the fiber. In other hand,
71 if the metal wires, which have good mechanical strength, were used as support should
72 make SPME an even easier method for routine analysis ⁴⁴. Xu et al. ⁴⁵ have etched the
73 bare stainless steel wire by hydrofluoric acid (HF) and applied as an SPME fiber for
74 the extraction of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), pyrethroid insecticides ⁴⁶
75 and polybrominated diphenyl ethers ⁴⁷. Zhang et al. ⁴⁸ have prepared the stainless steel
76 plunger wire by simply etching in HF to form a microporous structure and was used
77 as the extractant solvent holder. The extractant solvent could be easily held within the
78 pores created by the etching. In addition, the rough and porous structure of the etched
79 wire, which conceivably increased the interfacial area between solvent and aqueous
80 sample, increased the extraction efficiency. However, the report about the application
81 of the etched stainless steel wire as support in the preparation of IL-based SPME fiber
82 was very limited.

83 In this study, an IL-coated etched stainless steel (IL-ESS) SPME fiber was
84 prepared and first used for headspace SPME (HS-SPME) of PFRs from water samples.
85 The extraction efficiency of the prepared SPME fiber was investigated. The effects of
86 parameters on the extraction efficiency of the proposed fiber for PFRs from water
87 were investigated. Afterwards, the optimized method was applied to the determination

88 of PFRs in real water samples.

89

90 **2. Experimental**

91 *2.1 Reagents and materials*

92 1-Ethyl-3-methylimidazolium hexafluorophosphate, ([C₂MIM][PF₆])

93 1-butyl-3-methylimidazolium hexafluorophosphate ([C₄MIM][PF₆]),

94 1-hexyl-3-methylimidazolium hexafluorophosphate ([C₆MIM][PF₆]) and

95 1-octyl-3-methylimidazolium hexafluorophosphate ([C₈MIM][PF₆]) with purity of

96 99% were purchased from Lanzhou Greenchem ILS, LICP, CAS (Lanzhou, China).

97 Tripropyl phosphate (TPP), TNBP, TCEP, TPHP, TCIPP, TDCIPP and TEHP were

98 obtained from Aldrich (Milwaukee, WI, USA). Some physicochemical properties of

99 the analytes are shown in Table S1. Individual stock solutions of each compound (1.0

100 mg mL⁻¹) were prepared in acetone. A mixed standard solution of the analytes (1.0 mg

101 L⁻¹) was also prepared with acetone from the individual standard stock solutions. All

102 of the solutions were sealed and stored at 4 °C in darkness. HPLC-grade methanol and

103 dichloromethane was obtained from Merck (Darmstadt, Germany). Ultrapure

104 deionized water was obtained from a Milli-Q water purification system (Milli-Q

105 system, Millipore, Beldford, MA).

106

107 *2.2 Apparatus*

108 The commercial SPME fibers, including polydimethylsiloxane (PDMS),

109 carboxen/polydimethylsiloxane (CAR/PDMS) and PDMS/DVB, supplied from

110 Supelco (Bellefonte, PA, USA). A heating magnetic stirrer model HJ-3 purchased

111 from Jingfeng Instrument Co. Ltd. (Shanghai, China) was employed for stirring and
112 heating samples during the extraction.

113

114 *2.3 Fiber preparation*

115 The stainless steel wire (75 mm length and 250 μm diameter) was etched mainly
116 according to the study of Yan et al ⁴⁵ with a little modification. The tip 10 mm
117 segment of a stainless steel wire was immersed into HF for 15 min at 40 °C. Then, the
118 etched part of the stainless steel wire was taken out and washed gently by ultrapure
119 deionized water, and conditioned at 300 °C for 4 h under nitrogen in the gas
120 chromatograph (GC, 7890N, Agilent Technologies, USA) injector port before coating.
121 And the morphology of the etched stainless steel wire was observed by using a
122 Hitachi S-3400N II scanning electron microscopy. Because of the high viscosity of
123 the 1-alkyl-3-methylimidazolium hexafluorophosphate ($[\text{C}_n\text{MIM}][\text{PF}_6]$), it is
124 inappropriate to use pure IL as coating solution. To make the IL amendable to coating,
125 the coating solution was prepared by mixing 900 μl of $[\text{C}_8\text{MIM}][\text{PF}_6]$ and 100 μl of
126 dichloromethane. The above-conditioned etched part of the stainless steel wire was
127 dipped vertically into the coating solution and held for 5 min, and then removed and
128 kept in air for another 2 min for the evaporation of dichloromethane. This procedure
129 was repeated three times to obtain relatively thick coating and better repeatability of
130 the coating. Prior to extraction, the obtained fiber was conditioned at 160 °C under
131 helium stream in the GC injection port for 5 min to eliminate residual solvents from
132 the fibers. The above-mentioned preparation procedure was repeated each time before

133 utilizing IL-ESS SPME fiber for headspace extraction. The preparation of IL-coated
134 fused-silica SPME fiber was described in Supporting Information.

135

136 *2.4 HS-SPME*

137 A 10-mL of working solution (spiked with 5.0 ng mL⁻¹ of the analytes) was
138 placed into a 15-mL brown glass vial with polytetrafluoroethylene-coated septa. After
139 the addition of NaCl and magnetic stirring bar, the vial was tightly sealed with an
140 aluminum cap to prevent sample loss due to evaporation. Then, the septum piercing
141 needle of the SPME device was introduced into the glass vial to allow a 1-cm length
142 of the fiber to be exposed to the headspace over the stirred solution for 40 min at
143 60 °C for extraction using a constant stir rate of 600 rpm. Afterwards, the fiber was
144 withdrawn into the needle, removed from the sample vial and immediately introduced
145 into the GC injector port for thermal desorption. Each determination was performed in
146 triplicate to assess reproducibility. A 7890N GC (Agilent Technologies, USA),
147 equipped with a split/splitless injector, a HP-5 capillary column (30 m×0.32 mm i.d.,
148 0.25 μm film thickness) and flame photometric detector (FPD), was employed to
149 separate and detect the analytes. Chromatographic conditions were provided in
150 Supporting Information.

151

152 *2.5. Determination of enrichment factors*

153 The enhancement factor (EF) was used to evaluate the preconcentration of the
154 analytes using the prepared fiber. EF was defined as the ratio of the sensitivity of an

155 analyte after SPME extraction to that before extraction (i.e., by direct injection of 1
156 μL of standard solution) using the chromatographic peak area for quantification ⁴⁹.

157

158 *2.6 Water samples*

159 Three water samples, including lake water, sewage treatment plant (STP) effluent
160 and tap water were selected from Pingdingshan city, China, for validating the
161 proposed method. No pretreatment procedure was carried out prior to HS-SPME.

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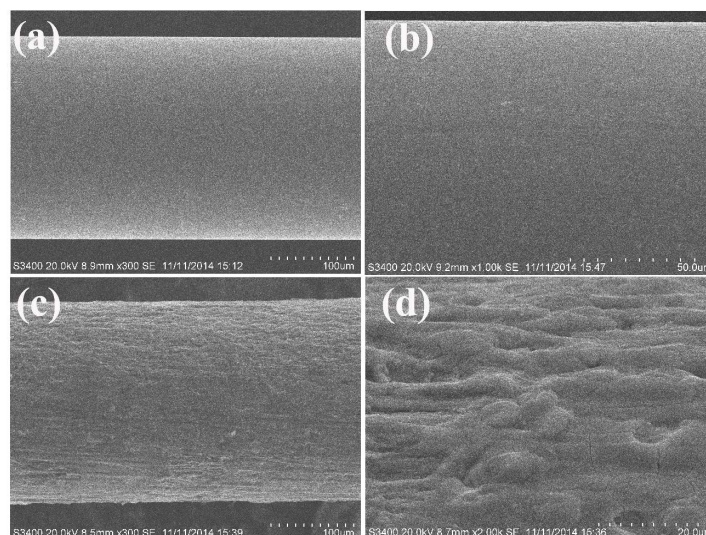
163 *2.7 Quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC)*

164 The QA/QC has been conducted as described by Sun et al ⁵⁰. Briefly, the use of
165 any plastic and rubber material was avoided to minimize possible contamination of
166 the samples during sampling, storage, transport and extraction ¹⁹. Only amber-colored
167 glassware was used to minimize the losses of compounds by photodegradation. The
168 laboratory blanks were investigated similarly to Section 2.4 but without the spiking of
169 the target compounds. The results showed that no target compound was observed. GC
170 peak identification was conducted by comparing the retention times to that of the
171 analytes in a standard solution. Meanwhile, a Trace GC Ultra coupled to an ISQ MS
172 (Thermo Scientific, USA) was used for the identification of the target analytes.

173

174 **3. Results and discussion**

175 *3.1 Considerations of IL-ESS fiber for SPME of PFRs*

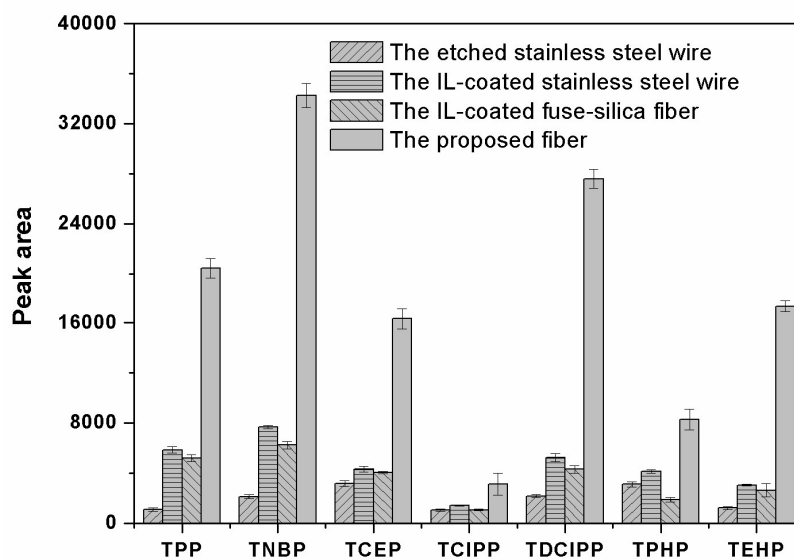


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177 Fig. 1. Scanning electron micrographs of the surface of the stainless steel wire before (a and b)

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and after (c and d) etching.



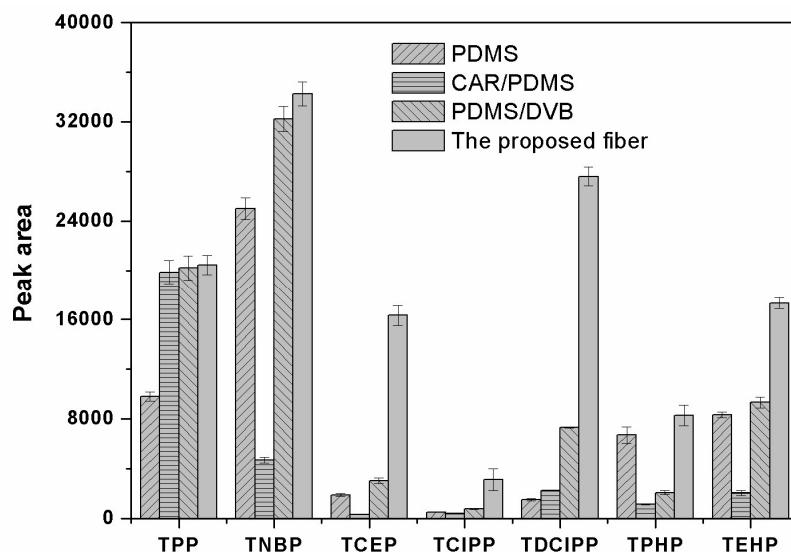
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180 Fig. 2. Comparison of the extraction efficiencies for PFRs by the etched stainless fiber, the

181 IL-coated stainless steel fiber, the IL-coated fuse-silica fiber and the IL-coated etched stainless

182 steel fiber. Extraction conditions: extraction time, 40 min; extraction temperature, 60 °C; stirring

183 speed, 600 rpm; the concentration of salt, 30% (w/v); desorption time, 5 min.



184

185

Fig. 3. Comparison of the extraction efficiencies for PFRs by the proposed fiber and

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commercial fibers. Extraction conditions as in Fig. 2.

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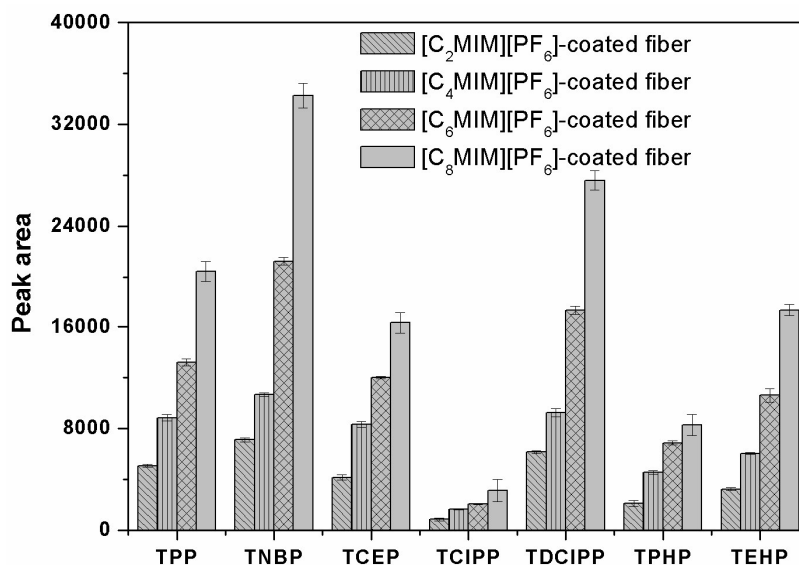
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The surface morphology of the stainless steel wire before and after etching was shown in Fig. 1. It shows that the surface of the stainless steel wire was smooth before etching but became rough and porous after etching. The rough and porous structure of the etched stainless steel wire and the high viscosity of IL would allow IL to be held properly in the pores. Moreover, the rough and porous structure of the etched stainless steel wire can also load more IL, which would result in the high extraction capacity of the prepared coating. To test the above-mentioned discussion, the relevant experiments were performed to investigate the extraction capacity of the prepared fiber. As shown in Fig. 2, the IL-ESS fiber exhibited the higher extraction capacity for PFRs than that of the bare etched stainless steel fiber, the IL-coated stainless steel fiber and the IL-coated fuse-silica fiber. The extraction capacity of the proposed fiber was also higher than that of commercial PDMS, CAR/PDMS and PDMS/DVB fiber (Fig. 3). The obtained results supported the above-mentioned hypothesis that the

200 prepared fiber has good extraction capacity.

201

202 3.2 Optimization of the coating procedure



203

204 Fig. 4. Comparison of the extraction efficiencies for PFRs by the different IL-ESS SPME

205

fiber. Extraction conditions as in Fig. 2.

206

Four [C_nMIM][PF₆] (n=2, 4, 6, 8) were selected and investigated for the coating,

207

because this kind of IL is high thermal stability and viscosity, good extraction

208

capacity for organic compounds and fairly inexpensive compared with other ILs⁵¹.

209

To investigate the extraction capacity of the different IL-coated fiber, the etched

210

stainless steel wire was all dipped into the coating solution for 5 min and repeated for

211

three times, and the obtained fiber was then used to HS-SPME of PFRs. As shown in

212

Fig. 4, the extraction efficiency of the prepared fiber was dramatically improved with

213

the increasing of alkyl chain length. And the extraction capacity of

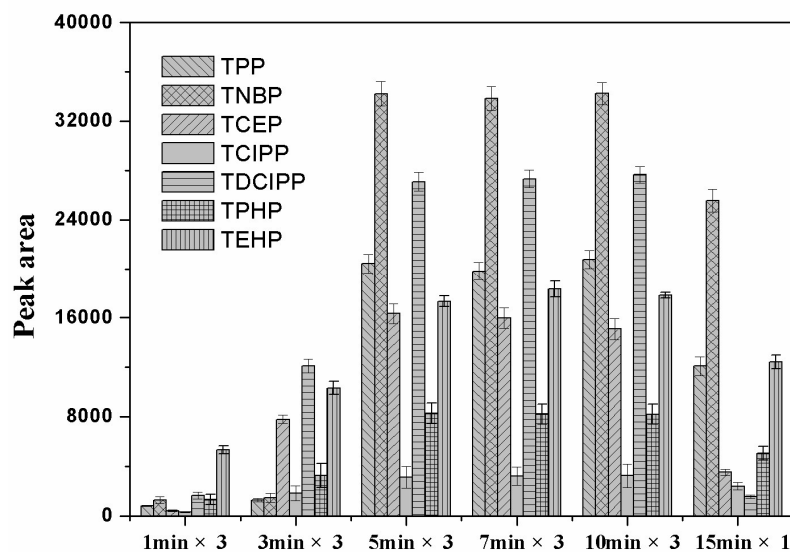
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[C₈MIM][PF₆]-coated etched stainless steel fiber was highest among that of the other

215

ILs. It may due to the fact that [C₈MIM][PF₆] is more hydrophobic than the other ILs

216 because of its longest alkyl chain.



217

218 Fig. 5. Effect of different coating times and conditions on the PFRs peak area. Extraction

219

conditions as in Fig. 2.

220 The coating procedure was optimized to obtain better repeatability and higher

221 sensitivity. It can be seen from Fig. 5, if the coating was kept to be three cycles, the

222 peak areas would increase with the dipping time increasing from 1 to 5 min. But, the

223 longer coating time, such as 7 min and 10 min, did not bring the significant improved

224 extraction efficiency to the obtained fiber. It was also illustrated the extraction

225 capacity of the fiber, that was coated just by one cycle of dipping in the coating

226 solution for 15 min, was significantly decreased. Therefore, the fiber was coated by

227 three cycles and dipped in the coating solution for 5 min in the following studies.

228

229 3.3. Optimization of HS-SPME conditions

230 3.3.1 Extraction time

231 SPME is an equilibrium-based technique and there is a direct relationship

232 between the extracted amount and the extraction time. When the extraction
233 equilibrium has not yet reached, the extraction amount increases with the prolonging
234 of extraction time. The extraction time was investigated in the range of 20-60 min. It
235 can be seen from Fig.S1 in Supporting Information that the extraction equilibrium
236 was not achieved even after a period of 60 min. In the study of Rodríguez et al., the
237 extraction equilibrium was also not obtained after a period of 180 min in direct
238 solid-phase microextraction of PFRs ²⁵. In order to match the duration of sample
239 preparation and chromatographic analysis, 40 min were selected as the extraction
240 time.

241

242 3.3.2 Extraction temperature

243 Extraction temperature is an important parameter in HS-SPME. The increasing
244 temperature can enhance mass transfer of the analytes from the sample to headspace.
245 However, it also decreases the amount of analytes that can be retained by the coating.
246 The effect of extraction temperature on the extraction efficiency of the proposed
247 coating for PRFs was investigated in the range of 40-80 °C. Results shown in Fig.S2
248 indicated that extraction efficiency improved significantly with extraction temperature
249 increasing from 40 to 60 °C. But, the further increasing of extraction temperature did
250 not further enhance the extraction efficiency. According to the results, 60 °C was
251 chosen as the optimum temperature for subsequent experiments.

252

253 3.3.3 Stirring speed

254 The stirring can enhance extraction process and reduce extraction time because

255 the equilibrium can be achieved rapidly. The stirring speed ranging from 0 to 600 rpm
256 was investigated. Higher stirring speed than 600 rpm was not considered because the
257 rotating of magnetic stirring bar was not very stable. As can be seen from Fig.S3, the
258 extraction efficiency increased significantly with the increasing of the stir speed. Thus,
259 the stirring speed of 600 rpm was adopted for the experiment.

260

261 *3.3.4 Ionic strength*

262 The increasing of ionic strength will decrease the solubility of organic
263 compounds in aqueous solution and produce a higher partial pressure of analytes in
264 the headspace volume. Consequently, the extraction capacity of the fiber was
265 improved. The influence of ionic strength on the extraction efficiency was
266 investigated by adding different amounts of NaCl varying from 0 to 30% (30% is the
267 saturated solubility of NaCl). As shown in Fig. S4, the extraction efficiency of the
268 proposed fiber for PFRs increased with the increasing amount of NaCl added.
269 Consequently, 30 % (w/v) of NaCl was added in the subsequent studies.

270

271 *3.3.5 Desorption time*

272 Desorption time can affect the amount of analytes desorbed from the fiber. It can
273 be seen from Fig.S5 that the peak areas increased with desorption time increasing
274 from 1 to 5 min, and then kept almost unchanged when desorption time raised to 5
275 min, which mean the desorption completed within 5 min. Thus, desorption time of 5
276 min was selected for subsequent studies.

277

278 3.4 Method evaluation

279 **Table 1.** Analytical parameters for PFRs measured with the proposed method.

Compound	Linear range (ng L ⁻¹)	R	LOD (ng L ⁻¹)	RSD (n=6, %)	EF
TPP	10-1×10 ⁵	0.9992	0.8	6.4	12.5
TNBP	10-5×10 ⁴	0.9994	0.9	5.7	18.2
TCEP	10-1×10 ⁵	0.9996	4.7	7.3	21.9
TCIPP	10-1×10 ⁵	0.9995	1.8	3.9	26.3
TDCIPP	10-1×10 ⁵	0.9984	6.5	8.2	30.3
TPHP	10-1×10 ⁵	0.9998	5.2	5.5	45.5
TEHP	10-1×10 ⁵	0.9964	9.3	7.8	42.9

280 A series of experiment with regard to the linearity, limits of detection (LODs),
281 repeatability and reproducibility was performed to validate the proposed method
282 under the optimized conditions. As illustrated in Table 1, the linear range of the
283 proposed procedure was in the range of 10-1×10⁵ ng L⁻¹ (10-5×10⁴ ng L⁻¹ for TNBP)
284 with correlation coefficient (R) greater than 0.9964. The LODs for the PFRs,
285 calculated at a signal-to-noise (S/N) ratio of 3, ranged from 0.8 to 9.3 ng L⁻¹. The
286 fiber-to-fiber reproducibility of the method, expressed as relative standard deviations
287 (RSDs), was evaluated by the RSDs of the peak areas of the analytes extracted by six
288 fibers prepared in the same batch and varied from 3.9 to 8.2%.

289 The EFs were also investigated to further investigate the extraction behavior of
290 the IL-ESS fiber for the analytes (Table 1). In general, the EFs positively correlated
291 with the hydrophobicity of the analytes. But the EFs of the chlorinated PFRs were
292 higher than the alkylated ones. It may be due to that, in the case of imidazolium-based
293 ILs, the C₂-H of imidazolium ring exhibits acidic character and possesses hydrogen

294 bond donor ability⁵², which will provide more hydrogen bond interaction with the
295 chlorinated substituents of the chlorinated PFRs than the alkylated ones. In addition,
296 although the hydrophobicity of TEHP was much higher than that of TPHP, their EFs
297 were similar. It may owe to that cationic moieties with an electron-rich aromatic
298 π -system of ILs produce strong interactions with the aromatic substituents⁵³ of TPHP,
299 thus TPHP have stronger interactions with the ILs than TEHP. In summary, the
300 affinity of the IL-ESS fiber to PFRs depended on not only the hydrophobicity but also
301 the chemical structures of the analytes.

302 To better assess the performance of the proposed method, Table 2 summarized
303 the comparative characteristics of the other previously reported methods for the
304 determination of PFRs in water samples, including LLE^{2, 22}, SPE^{20, 21},
305 membrane-assisted solvent extraction (MASE)⁵⁴, dispersive liquid-liquid
306 microextraction (DLLME)⁵⁵ and SPME²⁵. The drawbacks of LLE, SPE,
307 PDMS/DVB fiber and IL-coated sol-gel SPME fiber has been discussed in
308 Introduction. MASE and DLLME also have to suffer the low recovery of TCEP (5%
309 or 23%)^{54,55}. The proposed approach could provide comparable accuracy compared
310 with other reported methods. It worth noting that the detection limits of the
311 conventional other disposable IL-coated SPME fiber were generally higher than those
312 obtained using commercially SPME fibers because of the relative thin film of the
313 conventional disposable IL-coated SPME fiber⁵⁶. While, the detection limits of the
314 prepared IL-ESS fiber were lower than those obtained using commercially
315 PDMS/DVB fiber which may due to its high extraction capacity. In addition, the

316 **Table 2.** Comparison of analytical characteristics with the other methods for determination of PFRs in water samples.

317

Parameters	LLE ²	SPE ²¹	SPE ²⁵	MASE ⁵⁴	DLLME ⁵⁵	SPME ²⁵	SPME ¹⁸	SPME (This study)
Extraction phase	Dichloromethane	SPE material	SPE material	cyclohexane	acetone and CH ₃ CCl ₃ , (98:2)	PDMS–DVB	IL-based sol-gel	IL-ESS wire
Solvent consumption (mL)	165	55	17.25	1.25	1	—	—	—
Determination technique	GC-NPD	GC-MS	GC-NPD	LC–MS/MS	GC-NPD	GC-NPD	GC-FPD	GC-FPD
LOD (ng L ⁻¹)	0.8–2.9	1.2-2.9	5-10	3-25	10-80	15-25 (LOQ)	0.7-11.6	0.8-9.3
Recovery (%)	81-100	62-101	24-109	5-98	23-109	26.7-119.2	73.2-101.8	78.2-105.8
RSD	—	10-13%	2.1-16.7%	2-19%	2-17%	5.3-64.8%	3.3-7.6%	3.9-7.8%

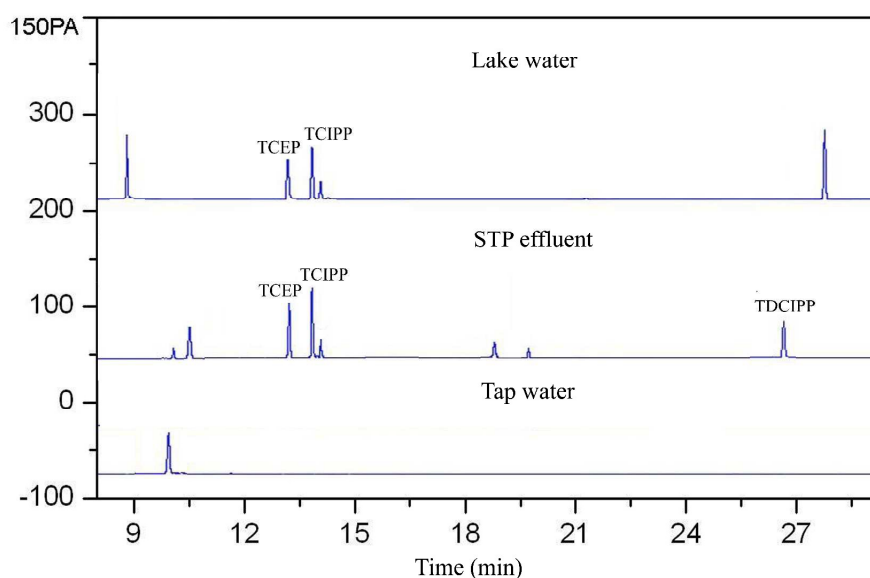
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320 developed methods showed good recoveries to TCEP and TEHP which will be
321 discussed later in the text. Moreover, the etched stainless steel wire was used as
322 support, thus the proposed fiber has high mechanical stability. The preparation
323 process of the proposed fiber was very simple, convenient. Owing to the prepared
324 fiber was disposable, no carryover between the determinations.

325

326 3.6. Application to water samples



327

328

Fig. 6. Chromatograms of extracts of FPRs from real water samples.

329 The feasibility of the proposed method for determining PFRs in lake water, STP
330 effluent and tap water was evaluated. The results were shown in Fig. 6 and Table 3.
331 TCEP and TCIPP were detected in lake water and STP effluent studied. TDCIPP was
332 also detected in the STP effluent. The frequent detection of the halogenated trimesters
333 in water samples may due to their high polarity and poor degradability, which may
334 prevent their sorption, biodegradation and removal by the sewage treatment plant⁵⁷.

335

Table 3. Analytical results for the determination of PFRs in real water samples.

Analyte	Lake water			STP effluent			Tap water		
	Concentration (ng L ⁻¹ , ±SD)	Recovery (%)	RSD (%)	Concentration (ng L ⁻¹ , ±SD)	Recovery (%)	RSD (%)	Concentration (ng L ⁻¹ , ±SD)	Recovery (%)	RSD (%)
TPP	nd ^a	82.2	4.3	nd	85.5	2.9	nd	92.2	5.7
TNBP	nd	94.6	2.1	nd	91.2	4.6	nd	88.5	2.0
TCEP	23.4±2.5	88.2	3.6	87.9±3.1	85.7	5.4	nd	89.4	3.2
TCIPP	78.2±5.7	86.5	5.5	118.6 ±8.9	79.0	4.2	nd	92.6	4.6
TDCIPP	nd	91.2	4.0	35.2±2.6	88.2	7.1	nd	105.8	1.2
TPHP	nd	78.2	2.6	nd	83.2	4.4	nd	87.9	2.4
TEHP	nd	96.2	7.7	nd	89.5	2.8	nd	90.4	3.1

336 ^aNot detected.

337

338

339 To evaluate the accuracy of the proposed method, recoveries were performed by
340 spiking PFRs standards into the real water samples at a concentration level of 50 ng/L
341 and applying the proposed procedure to the samples. It was illustrated that the
342 recoveries ranged from 78.2% to 105.8%, which means that the matrix may have
343 some effect on the proposed method, at least in relation to some of the analytes.
344 However, the RSDs were less than 7.7%, implying the established method was
345 reliable and applicable to the real samples analysis.

346

347 **4. Conclusions**

348 In this study, a simple and sensitive HS-SPME-GC-FPD method, using IL-ESS
349 SPME fiber, was first proposed for the determination of PFRs in water samples. The
350 preparation procedure of the proposed fiber was very convenient. The prepared
351 IL-ESS fiber have higher extraction capacity, better mechanical stability, lower cost
352 and comparable reproducibility (RSD<7.8%) compared with the commercially
353 available SPME fibers. Besides, the carryover could be avoided as a new fiber coating
354 is used for every determination. Under the optimal extraction conditions, the linear
355 range of the proposed procedure was in the range of $10^{-1} \times 10^5 \text{ ng L}^{-1}$ ($10^{-5} \times 10^4 \text{ ng L}^{-1}$
356 for TNBP). The fiber-to-fiber reproducibility varied from 3.9 to 8.2% and the LODs
357 ranged from 0.8 to 9.3 ng L^{-1} . The proposed method had been successfully applied to
358 the determination of PFRs in the real water samples with good recoveries and RSDs.
359 Based on the results, the proposed fiber has a great potential for widespread use as an
360 effective extraction tool for PFRs.

361

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