



Isoprothiolane Degradation in Water Column of Paddy Field from Penaga Village, Seberang Perai Utara, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia

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PAPER INFO

Paper history:

Received xx Month 201x

Accepted in revised form xx Month 201x

Keywords:

GC-MS

Hydrolysis

Isoprothiolane

Paddy field

Photodegradation

Surface water

Water quality

ABSTRACT

Rice field is one of the agriculture areas in Malaysia that is exposed to the usage of pesticide before the paddy planting phase, during vegetative phase and the post- harvesting phase. The study was to determine the water quality and also degradation of isoprothiolane in paddy field water samples. Isoprothiolane is one of the fungicides that is used during the vegetative phase to kill the fungi on the paddies. This study of isoprothiolane degradation in water samples was conducted in four different conditions, namely autoclaved water sample exposed to sunlight, autoclaved water sample kept in dark, non-autoclave water sample exposed to sunlight and non-autoclaved water sample kept in dark via laboratory batch experiment in a course of 30 days. The extraction and determination of the isoprothiolane in the water samples were done by solid phase extraction method (SPE) and analyzed by Gas Chromatography–Mass Spectrometry (GC-MS). The study revealed that isoprothiolane degraded very slowly in all four conditions within 30 days of observation, and the degradation rates ranged from 0.0003 to 0.0037 day⁻¹. The study also proved that the residue of isoprothiolane remained at least a month after its application.

doi: 10.5829/ijee.2017.08.04.02

INTRODUCTION

Pesticides are heterogeneous chemical compound. They are toxic and non-biodegradable substances that can harm our environment. Pesticides are designed as substances that can control, prevent, destroy, repel or mitigate any pests, including insects, animals, fungi and plants [1, 2]. Moreover, the application of pesticides on the crops is the easiest way to protect the crops and the crop yields from air-borne diseases and pests, increase the economic potential of the agricultural sector, and also increase the quality of yields [3, 4]. Apart from that, the reaction pathways and the degradation of pesticides play important roles in determining the process involved, the nature of the reactive intermediates, and their final products to control the dispersion of pesticides in the environment [5].

In a production of rice, water management important because it will supply water from the main canal, retain water at each plot and drain water from paddy fields. For the growth of paddy field in the crops, a large amount of water supply is needed. Therefore, if the pesticide is used in the surface water, it will give bad impact to water quality and also to aquatic animals.

Isoprothiolane (Diisopropyl 1,3-dithiolan-2-ylidenemalonate) is one of the active ingredients in pesticides. It has been categorized as a fungicide and used in Malaysian paddy fields [3]. Besides, it is also known as choline biosynthesis inhibitor (CBI) and is used to control the rice blast fungus such as leafhoppers and planthoppers on paddies. Some of the synthetic pesticides may have been banned in some countries because of their toxicity persistence in the environment and ecosystem such as food grain and non-target animals, reduction in the insect population, and contamination in soil and water [6].

The movement and degradation of pesticides are influenced by many factors, such as a country's climate and the condition of the soil, including pH, moisture content, type of soil, organic matter and clay contents. Moreover, the environmental condition where pesticides were applied on the crops, and the physical-chemical properties of the pesticides themselves also play important factors that determine how pesticides move and degrade in the environment [1]. A pesticide that enters the soil can degrade through various degradation processes or dissipation mechanisms. It can degrade via hydrolytic degradation, photolysis degradation, surface

run-off, leaching, volatilization, oxidation or reduction (usually occurs in aerobic or anaerobic condition), and microbial degradation (the pesticide compound is degraded by the available microorganisms in the soil) [7].

A study by Farahani et al. (2012) has shown that photochemical degradation and hydrolysis are the main pathways for carbofuran degradation in water. Biological degradation and the pH of the water are some of the main factors affecting the degradation of carbofuran in water [8]. Lartiges and Garrigues, (1995) study of degradation kinetics of organophosphorus (OP) and organonitrogen (ON) pesticides in water under different environmental circumstances found that the half-lives of OP pesticides could be more than several months which could lead to environmental pollution [9].

The degradation rate of pesticides is different between countries with a temperate climate and countries with a tropical climate. The important elements of climate that can affect the degradation rate of pesticides are the average amount of rainfall, the average temperature in the region, the average emission of sunlight, and the presence of microorganisms [10]. In general, tropical countries have heavier rainfall compared to countries with a temperate climate. Based on previous studies, rainfalls can influence the contamination of pesticides in soil and water by diluting the concentrations of pesticides in the environment or producing pesticide runoffs that could spread to the watersheds and irrigation channels. Besides, paddy fields in tropical countries have been identified to have adopted the practice of pesticides applications intensively, which has contributed to high pesticide contaminations in the agriculture sectors and the environment [11, 12].

Isoprothiolane is used in paddy fields to kill fungi that harm the crops and affect the production of rice during the planting season. This fungicide has been used in Malaysian paddy fields [3]. However, there have been limited studies on the degradation rate of isoprothiolane in soil and water in a tropical paddy field ecosystem, especially in Malaysia where the intensity of sunlight (UV) and the presence of microorganisms could lead to more rapid degradation. The purpose of this study is to determine the isoprothiolane degradation rate within 30 days in paddy field water which is subjected to four different conditions, namely autoclaved water sample exposed to sunlight, autoclaved water sample kept in dark, non-autoclaved water sample exposed to sunlight, and non-autoclaved water sample kept in dark.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Sampling site

The location of water sampling for this study was in a paddy field at Padang Tembusu Village. The village is located at Penaga Mukim 5, Seberang Perai Utara, Pulau Pinang, which is situated in the northern part of Peninsular Malaysia at the latitude of $5^{\circ}34'0.01''$ and longitude of $100^{\circ}22'0.01''$. It has an annual average range of about 27°C to 32°C for temperature, 100mm to 400mm for rainfall and 60% to 75% for relative humidity [13]. Figure 3.1 shows the location map of Padang Tembusu Village.

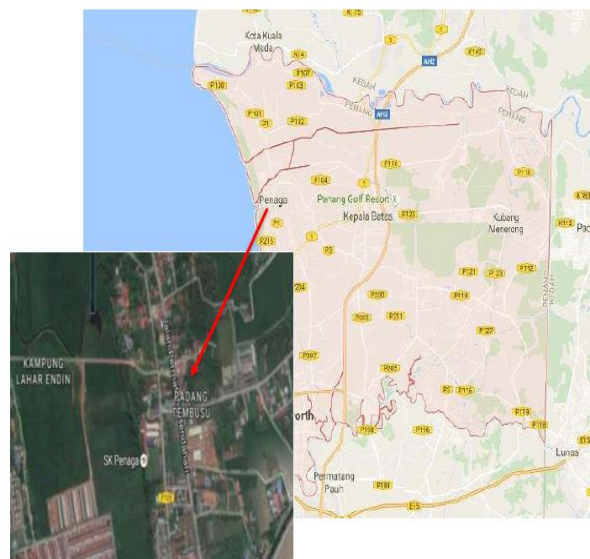


Figure 1. Map of Padang Tembusu Village, Penaga Mukim 5, Seberang Perai Utara, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.

Water quality test

The water samples at the paddy field were taken before, during and after paddy planting season in August until November 2016. The in-situ parameters that were measured including pH, temperature and turbidity. Meanwhile, the ex-situ parameters such as biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), chemical oxygen demand (COD) and total suspended solid (TSS) were analyzed in the laboratory.

Degradation study

In this study, the degradation course of isoprothiolane in the paddy field water under four conditions, namely autoclave, non-autoclave, with sunlight and without sunlight was followed for 30 days. The surface water from the river water near to the paddy field was taken and put into a 1L glass bottle for each condition. 40 sample bottles and 10 blank bottles were used in the experiment. All the bottles were wrapped in aluminium foil and stored in the refrigerator prior to the degradation study. The 1L sample was dosed with $4\mu\text{L}$ pesticide according to the recommendation provided by the manufacturer to the farmers. Half of the sample

bottles were autoclaved, and while the other half were not autoclaved before the pesticide dosing. Similarly, half of the sample bottles were exposed to sunlight, and while the other half were kept in the dark in a drying cabinet with an average temperature of 28°C. The sample bottles that were kept in the dark were covered with an aluminium foil to ensure that no light could penetrate through to the samples. The batch of the study was followed for 30 days. The data on the degradation rate was taken, starting from two weeks after the pesticide dosing until the 30th day. A blank sample was also prepared for each condition. The samples of water were extracted by using solid-phase extraction (SPE) and analyzed with Gas Chromatographic Mass Spectrometric (GC-MS). The experiment was conducted in triplicate.

Solid-phase extraction of water samples

The samples were extracted by solid-phase extraction (SPE) before being sent for GC-MS analysis. The solid-phase extraction (SPE) cartridges, DSC-C18 (500 mg/6 mL) were obtained from Supelco (Milan, Italy) supplier, and the solvents used were pesticide GC-grade. SPE and GC-MS were used to quantify the pesticide content in the water samples. Before undergoing the SPE process, the samples were filtered by 0.45-mm filter to remove any particulate matter. Throughout the SPE process, 10 mL of acetone was used to wash the C-18 cartridge under vacuum, followed by 3 mL of acetonitrile and 3 mL of distilled water. All the samples were mixed well and passed over the discs with a 1.5 mL/min flow rate under vacuum. After all the SPE tubes had been filled with water samples, the vacuum pump was turned on. When the suction occurred, the water samples were drawn into the C18 cartridges. The pressure knob was used to control the water flow through the SPE cartridge to fall in droplets. When the extraction was finished, the pesticide compound that was trapped in the cartridge was collected by using 6 mL of acetone as the eluting solvent. The pesticide compound that was collected by acetone was evaporated to 1 mL by rotavapor and stored in GC vial before being analysed by GC-MS [14].

Gas chromatographic mass spectrometric (GC-MS) analysis

The identification of Isoprothiolane pesticide was done by a gas chromatographic-mass spectrometer. It was performed on a gas chromatograph mass spectrometer-2010 plus with a Shimadzu model, and a capillary column BPX-5 (30 m x 0.25 mm, 0.25 µm film thickness). The carrier gas that was used was nitrogen at 1 mL min⁻¹. Data acquisition and control of the GCMS-2010 Plus was carried out by GC-MS solution software and data system software, and conducted with an injector temperature of 250°C, a temperature detector (280°C) and a splitless time of 0.75 min. The initial

temperature of 70°C, was increased at a rate of 10 °C min⁻¹ up to 160, followed by a rate of 3°C min⁻¹ up to 240°C. The 1µ volume of the sample solution was injected automatically in split mode [4].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Physicochemical characteristics of water

The basic parameter water quality of water samples was measured either in-situ or ex-situ. The purpose of taking this parameters measurement is to compare the water quality parameter before, during and after paddy planting season.

TABLE 1. Water quality of water samples

| | Before Planting | During Planting | After Planting |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| pH | 8.1 | 6.0 | 6.5 |
| Temp (°C) | 35.3 | 34.2 | 33.8 |
| Turbidity (NTU) | 31.8 | 44.1 | 23.7 |
| BOD(mg/L) | 2.9 | 4.7 | 6.4 |
| COD(mg/L) | 36.5 | 79.5 | 109.2 |
| TSS(mg/L) | 48.6 | 65.5 | 17.3 |

As shown in Table 1, the pH values in the study area ranged from 6.0 to 8.1. The pH value measured before planting activities was higher, compared to pH value during and after planting activities. This was caused by the use of chemical fertilizer such as pretilachlor and lambda-cyhalothrin to enhance the plantation yield might result in increased of soil humus. During planting, the pesticide application to the field has reduced the pH. Hence, the pH values observed to increase as paddy plot was filled with water at the time when it passed the paddy plot [15].

The BOD concentration continually increased during planting activities because of the decaying process and fertilizer applications which might increase the organics matters in the water. BOD5 readings increased mostly after harvesting activities from 4.7 to 6.4 mg/l. The higher of BOD values might due to the large quantity of organic waste in the water body after planting activities such as harvest waste, fertilizer runoff manure and other waste. A lot of bacterias present working to decompose this wastes [16]. Before and during planting activities which included fertilization and pesticide application might also influence the BOD values. According to Mahmood et al. (2007), during this period, the bacteria used more oxygen in the oxidation process of the organic material. The lower BOD value indicates that the lower organic material in the water. The decrease of organic material influences the BOD value, because oxygen demand in the water by aerobic

bacteria decreases in the process of oxidation organic material [17].

Table 1 shows the highest value of COD was recorded after planting activities which were at 109.2 mg/l. It seemed to increase due to the level of organic matters from fertilizers during fertilization activities. According to Zuhadi, (2006), at Sungai Danga the COD values found to be in the higher range of all the sampling stations after harvesting activities ranged from 441.67 mg/l to 480 mg/l [18]. The higher the COD value might also be contributed by human activities on land and residential areas nearby. For total suspended solids (TSS), its values measured before planting activities was 48.6 mg/l, while TSS values during planting activities seemed to increase to 65.5 mg/l and it might be due to fertilizers and pesticide applications. These activities might give impact to soil particles, flows with runoff to the water body and as a consequent increase in suspended solids as well as turbidity of water samples.

Degradation of isoprothiolane in water samples

In this study, the degradation of isoprothiolane was followed in four conditions to mimic the field conditions, when water samples were exposed to sunlight, during night time, with and without the enhancement from existing microorganisms (non-autoclaved and autoclaved samples). Thus, the different study conditions might illustrate the rate of degradation of the isoprothiolane by hydrolysis, photodegradation, and biodegradation.

Non-autoclaved water samples with exposure to sunlight

The degradation of isoprothiolane after the water samples were dosed with pesticide according to the recommended usage in field condition, in non-autoclaved samples with exposure to sunlight is shown in Figure 2. The rate of degradation calculated from the data was 0.0003 day⁻¹, which was the slowest amongst the four conditions. It was noticed that the least degradation occurred only after 20 days of dosing.

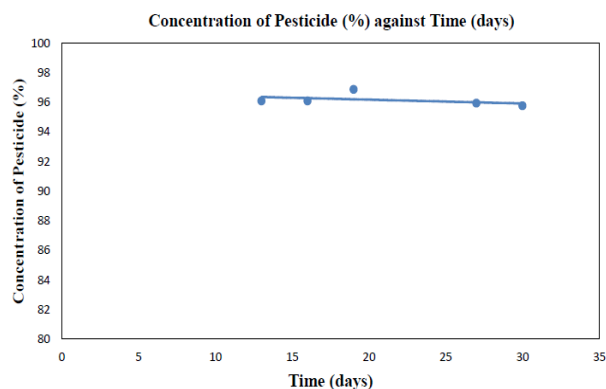


Figure 2. The concentration of Pesticide (%) against Time (days) in Non-autoclaved water samples with exposure to sunlight.

The concentrations of pesticide in water samples on the 19th, 27th and 30th day were 96.87%, 95.95% and 95.77% respectively. During the experiment, algae growths were observed after 10 days of incubation, as shown in Figure 3.

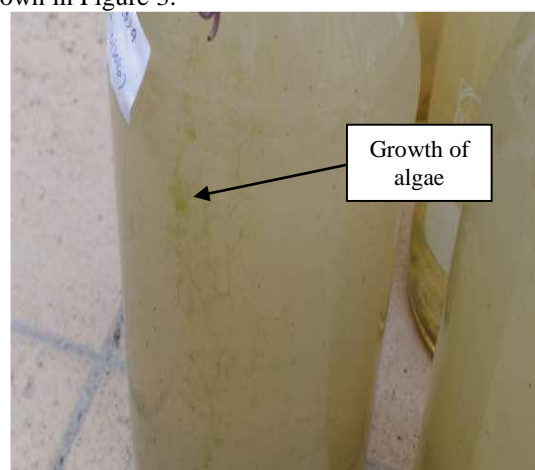


Figure 3. The growth of algae in the non-autoclaved water samples exposed to sunlight.

Degradation of isoprothiolane in non-autoclaved water samples kept in dark.

Based on Figure 4, the degradation of isoprothiolane in non-autoclaved water samples which were kept in the dark started to degrade on the 19th day. The degradation rate was also very slow at 0.001 day⁻¹. The concentrations of pesticide on the 19th, 24th, 27th and 30th day were 96.06%, 95.29%, 94.43% and 94.9% respectively.

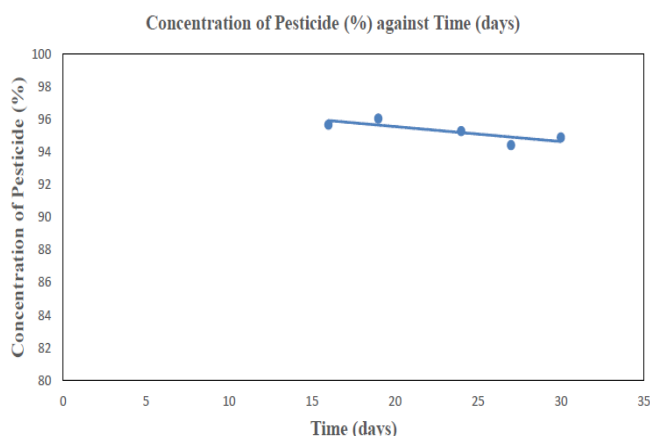


Figure 4. The concentration of Pesticide (%) against Time (days) in non-autoclaved water samples kept in dark.

Degradation of isoprothiolane in autoclaved water samples exposed to sunlight.

The degradation plot of isoprothiolane in autoclaved water samples with exposure to sunlight is shown in Figure 5. It was noticed that the rate of degradation in this condition was faster compared to the former condition, at a rate of 0.0037 day⁻¹. It began to degrade on the 15th, 24th, 27th and 30th day after the application of the pesticide. The concentrations of isoprothiolane on the 24th, 27th and 30th day were 95.77%, 94.54% and 90.59% respectively. The presence of algae growth in this condition was noticed after the 23rd day of pesticide dosing, as shown in Figure 6.

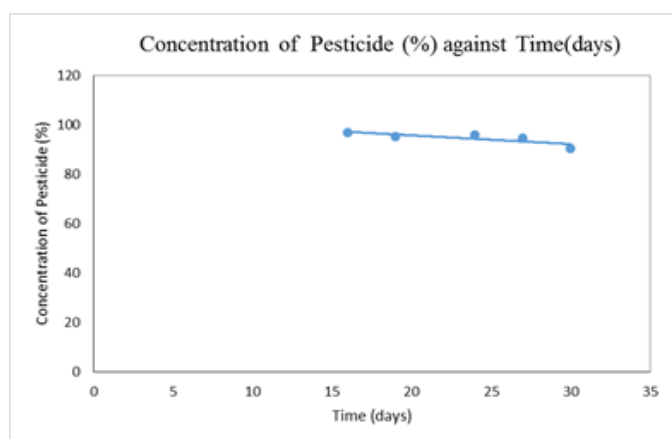


Figure 5. The concentration of Pesticide (%) against Time (days) in autoclaved water samples exposed to sunlight.

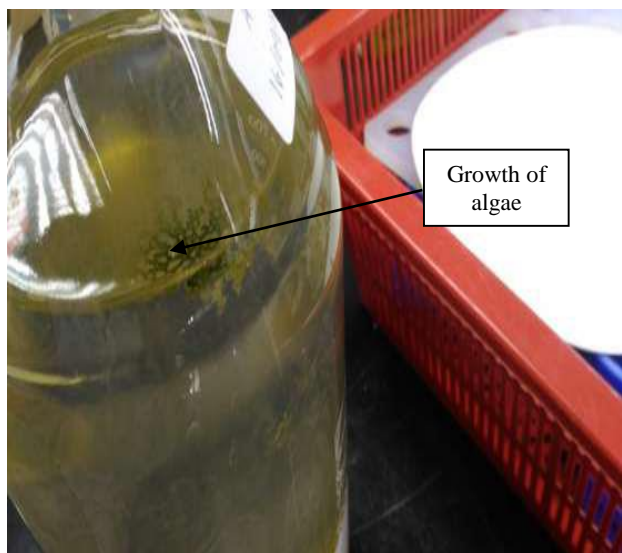


Figure 6. The growth of algae in the autoclaved water samples exposed to sunlight.

Degradation of Isoprothiolane in autoclaved water samples kept under dark condition.

The degradation rate of isoprothiolane in the autoclaved water samples under the dark condition was 0.002 day⁻¹.

1. Figure 7 shows that the trend of the isoprothiolane degradation within the experimental period is clear.

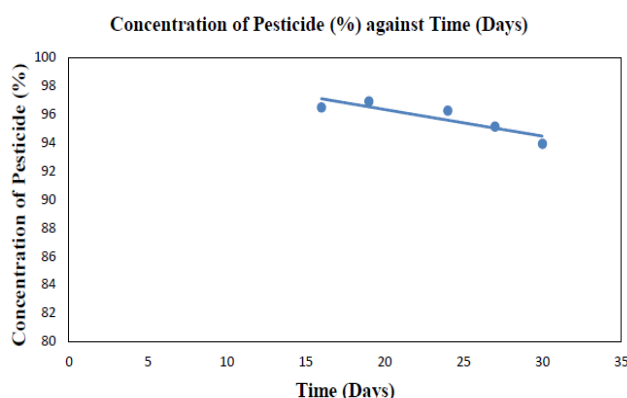


Figure 7. The concentration of Pesticide (%) against Time (Days) in autoclaved water samples kept in dark condition.

Based on the results shown in Figures 2, 4, 5 and 7, it can be concluded that the rate of isoprothiolane degradation in the water samples in all four conditions was very slow within the 30 days after the pesticide application. The presence of pesticide residues that was trapped in the higher concentration of suspended matter, such as algae and other particles with a mixture of the low organic content of sediment, might have led to the smaller 'disappearance' in the batch of study [19].

Throughout the experiment, the growth of algae was noticed in the water samples that were exposed to sunlight. Additionally, the growth of algae in non-autoclaved water samples was faster compared to autoclaved water samples without the presence of the microorganisms. In the non-autoclaved water samples, the algae began to grow after 10 days of isoprothiolane pesticide dosing. Meanwhile, in the autoclaved water samples without the presence of microorganisms, the algae started to appear after 23 days of the experiment. The factors that caused the growth of algae in the water samples were the presence of enough sunlight and nutrients that promoted its growth [20].

CONCLUSION

In this degradation study, based on 30 days of observation, the range of isoprothiolane degradation rate can be considered to be very slow. It was observed that the rate of degradation of isoprothiolane was much higher, at 0.0037 day⁻¹ when the water sample went through the autoclave process and was exposed to the sunlight, compared to water samples in the dark which had a rate of degradation at 0.002 day⁻¹. The residual of isoprothiolane was the least after 30 days of application and was not susceptible to hydrolysis, photolysis and biodegradation. As a recommendation, the duration of the degradation study needs to be

extended to more than 30 days to get a more significant trend of the degradation rate.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to extend their appreciation to Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and the staff of Department of Irrigation and Drainage Seberang Perai Utara in Pulau Pinang for all the assistance given during the period of study. The authors are also grateful to USM Fundamental Research Grant Scheme FRGS (203/PTEKIND/6711466).

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Persian Abstract

DOI: 10.5829/ijee.2017.08.04.02

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