

Elsevier Editorial System(tm) for Journal of Chromatography A
Manuscript Draft

Manuscript Number: JCA-10-2200R1

Title: Solid-phase extraction using molecularly imprinted polymer for selective extraction of natural and synthetic estrogens from aqueous samples

Article Type: ISC 2010

Keywords: Estrogens; molecularly imprinted polymers; ultra high performance liquid chromatography; mass spectrometry; water samples.

Corresponding Author: Dr Paolo Lucci,

Corresponding Author's Institution: University of Barcelona

First Author: Paolo Lucci

Order of Authors: Paolo Lucci; Oscar Núñez, Ph.D.; Maria Teresa Galceran, Professor

1 Solid-phase extraction using molecularly imprinted polymer for
2 selective extraction of natural and synthetic estrogens from aqueous
3 samples

4 **Paolo Lucci***, Oscar Núñez, M.T. Galceran

5 Department of Analytical Chemistry, University of Barcelona, Av. Diagonal 647, 08028 Barcelona, Spain
6
7
8

9 **Abstract**

10 A method is proposed for the clean-up and preconcentration of natural and synthetic estrogens
11 from aqueous samples employing molecularly imprinted polymer (MIP) as selective sorbent
12 for solid-phase extraction (SPE). The selectivity of the MIP was checked toward several
13 selected natural and synthetic estrogens such as estrone (E1), 17 β -estradiol (β -E2), 17 α -
14 estradiol (α -E2), estriol (E3), 17 α -ethinylestradiol (EE2), dienestrol (DIES) and
15 diethylstilbestrol (DES). Ultrahigh pressure liquid chromatography (UHPLC) coupled to a
16 TSQ triple quadrupole mass spectrometry (QqQ) was used for analysis of target analytes. The
17 chromatographic separation of the selected compounds was performed in less than 2 min
18 under isocratic conditions. The method was applied to the analysis of estrogens in spiked river
19 and tap water samples. High recoveries (>82%) for estrone, 17 β -estradiol, 17 α -estradiol,
20 estriol and 17 α -ethinylestradiol were obtained. Lower but still satisfactory recoveries (>48%)
21 were achieved for dienestrol and diethylstilbestrol. The method was validated and found to be
22 linear in the range 50-500 ng L⁻¹ with correlation coefficients (R^2) greater than 0.995 and
23 repeatability relative standard deviation (RSD) below 8% in all cases. For analysis of 100-ml
24 sample, the method detection limits (LOD) ranged from 4.5 to 9.8 ng L⁻¹ and the limit of
25 quantitation (LOQ) from 14.9 to 32.6 ng L⁻¹. To demonstrate the potential of the MIP
26 obtained, a comparison with commercially available C₁₈ SPE was performed. Molecularly
27 imprinted SPE showed higher recoveries than commercially available C₁₈ SPE for most of the
28 compounds.

29 These results showed the suitability of the MIP-SPE method for the selective extraction of a
30 class of structurally related compounds such as natural and synthetic estrogens.

31
32 **KEYWORDS:** Estrogens; molecularly imprinted polymers; ultrahigh pressure liquid chromatography; mass
33 spectrometry; water samples.

* Corresponding author. Tel. 34-93-4021286;; Fax :34-93-4021233.
E-mail address : paololucci2001@yahoo.it (Paolo Lucci)

34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68

1. Introduction

Endocrine disrupting compounds (ECDs) are a heterogeneous group of substances that may interact with the endocrine system of organisms. Estrogens are important members of the ECDs group and they have been often recognized as the major contributors to the endocrine-disrupting activity observed in aquatic environments [1]. They are excreted into the aquatic environment through human and animal urine and the use of natural and synthetic estrogens in medicine or in veterinary have caused their presence in aquatic ecosystems. Although the environmental concentrations of estrogens are very low (up to 105 ng L^{-1}) [2,3,4], their adverse effect on the reproduction of wildlife and humans is not negligible [5]. To assess the ecological risk of these compounds, sensitive determination of estrogens in environment is needed.

Several analytical methods have been developed to identify and quantify ECDs in water samples [6], including high-performance liquid chromatography with several detection systems such as UV [7,8], fluorescence [9] and coupled to mass spectrometry [10,11,12,13], gas-chromatography after derivatization [14] and enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay [15].

Currently, liquid chromatography coupled with tandem mass spectrometry is the most common approach. However, as the concentrations of the estrogenic compounds in environmental matrices are very low, a clean-up and preconcentration step is usually required in order to minimize interferences and improve method accuracy and sensitivity. Solid-phase extraction (SPE) is a well-established method routinely used for clean-up and preconcentration step of this compounds [16]. The main drawback of conventional SPE sorbents is their lack of selectivity resulting in co-extraction of interfering matrix components, which can negatively affect quantitation. Selectivity can be obtained using sorbents based on molecularly imprinted polymers (MIP). These types of sorbents are synthetic materials possessing an artificially generated three-dimensional network that is able to specifically rebind a target analyte, or class of structurally related compounds. MIP has the advantages of being very selective, cost-effective, and not suffering from storage limitations and stability problems regarding organic solvents. MIPs have been proposed in recent years as sorbent for the extraction and/or removal of endocrine disrupting compounds [17,18,19]. In addition, the potential of MIP as SPE sorbent for extraction of diethylstilbestrol [20,21], 17β -estradiol [22] and 17α -ethinylestradiol [23] from aqueous samples has also been demonstrated. The aim of this work was to develop for the first time a group-selective extraction method based on molecularly imprinted polymer for the analysis of natural (estrone, 17β -estradiol, 17α -

69 estradiol, estriol) and synthetic estrogens (17 α -ethinylestradiol, dienestrol and
70 diethylstilbestrol) in aqueous samples. For analysis of the selected analytes ultrahigh pressure
71 liquid chromatography (UHPLC) coupled to a TSQ triple quadrupole mass spectrometry
72 (QqQ) with atmospheric pressure chemical ionization (APCI) was used. The applicability of
73 the method was evaluated analyzing estrogens in river and tap water samples spiked at
74 concentrations similar to those found in the aquatic environment.

75

76 **2. Experimental**

77

78 *2.1 Materials and chemicals*

79

80 HPLC-grade methanol, water and acetonitrile for the UHPLC analysis were purchased from
81 Riedel-de Haën (Seelze, Germany). Acetonitrile, acetone, chloroform and methanol used for
82 the synthesis and chromatographic evaluation of the polymers were supplied by Carlo Erba
83 (Val de Reuil, France). Estrone (E1), 17 β -estradiol (β -E2), 17 α -estradiol (α -E2), estriol (E3),
84 17 α -ethinylestradiol (EE2), dienestrol (DIES) and diethylstilbestrol (DES) (structures shown
85 in **Fig.1**) were from Sigma-Aldrich (Steinheim, Germany). Nitrogen (99.8% pure) supplied by
86 Claind Nitrogen Generator N2 FLO (Lenno, Italy) was used for the mass spectrometry
87 ionization source. High-purity Argon (Ar₁) and helium, purchased from Air Liquide (Madrid,
88 Spain), were used as a collision-induced gas (CID gas) in the triple quadrupole mass
89 spectrometer.

90 Molecularly imprinted polymer (product code: AFFINIMIP) and non-imprinted polymer
91 (NIP) were provided by POLYINTELL (Val de Reuil, France). MIPs are obtained by radical
92 polymerization using initiator 2,2'-azobis-isobutyronitrile from Sigma-Aldrich (Steinheim,
93 Germany) and based on difunctional acrylic cross-linker monomers (Sigma-Aldrich,
94 Steinheim, Germany). Isolute cartridges (3 mL) packed with 100 mg of C₁₈ material were
95 purchased from IST (Mid Glamorgan, UK).

96

97

98 *2.2 Instrumentation*

99

100 Chromatographic evaluation of the imprinted polymers was performed in an LC system from
101 Gilson (Villiers le Bell, France) that consisted of a Pump 322 and a UV/VIS detector
102 (UV/VIS-155). Stainless steel LC columns (250 mm x 2.1 mm) filled with molecularly
103 imprinted and non-imprinted polymers were packed using 1666 HPLC column Slurry Packer
104 (Alltech Associates Applied Science Ltd, Lancashire, UK). The UHPLC system used for the

105 MIP-SPE evaluation consisted of an Accela liquid chromatograph system (Thermo Fisher
106 Scientific, San José, CA, USA) coupled to a triple quadrupole mass spectrometer TSQ
107 Quantum Ultra AM (Thermo Fisher Scientific, San José, CA, USA) equipped with
108 atmospheric pressure chemical ionization (APCI) source. The column used to analyze the
109 various MIP-SPE fractions was an Ascentis Express Phenyl-Hexyl HPLC Column (150 mm ×
110 2.1 mm i.d., 2.7 μm particle size) from Supelco (Bellefonte, PA, USA) ~~Sigma-Aldrich~~. The
111 Xcalibur software version 2.0 (Thermo Fisher Scientific, San José, CA, USA) was used to
112 control the LC/MS system and to process data.

113

114

115 **2.3 Procedure**

116

117 *2.3.1 Chromatographic evaluation of the imprinted polymers*

118

119 Imprinted and non imprinted polymers (25-45 μm particles) were slurry-packed in
120 chloroform/methanol (80:20, v/v) into LC columns using a slurry packer. The LC was carried
121 out at 21 °C and the flow rate was kept constant at 1 mL min⁻¹. The analytical wavelength was
122 set at 220 nm. Acetone was used as a void volume marker and the retention factor (*k*) for each
123 analyte was calculated as $k = (t-t_0) t_0^{-1}$, where *t* and *t*₀ are the retention times of the analyte and
124 the void marker (acetone), respectively. The imprinted factor (IF) was calculated as $IF = k_{MIP}$
125 k_{NIP}^{-1} , *i.e.* the ratio of the retention factor of each analyte in the MIP column to that in the NIP
126 column. The elution times of the void marker on MIP and NIP columns were 0.6 and 0.58
127 min, respectively.

128

129 *2.3.2 Extraction and clean-up using MIP-SPE*

130

131 Empty SPE cartridges of 4-mL capped with fritted polypropylene disks at the bottom and on
132 the top were packed with 100 mg of each polymer particles (imprinted and non-imprinted).
133 Before each use, sorbents were conditioned with acetonitrile (5 mL) followed by water (5
134 mL). For the MIP-SPE experiments, 100mL of Milli-Q, river and tap water samples free from
135 analytes were filtered using 0.45μm pore size cellulose filters and spiked with different
136 amounts of estrogens to reach a final concentration of 50, 100, 150 and 200 ng L⁻¹. The
137 samples were percolated through the MIP-SPE cartridge at the flow rate of 2 ml min⁻¹. The
138 sorbent was washed with 4 mL of water/acetonitrile (80:20, v/v) followed by 2 mL of water.
139 Full vacuum was applied for 5 min to ensure the polymer was completely dry. Then, the
140 sorbent was washed with acetonitrile (2 mL) followed by 2 mL of acetonitrile/methanol

141 mixture (95:5, v/v). Estrogenic compounds were finally eluted from the cartridges with three
142 aliquots (3 x 1 mL) of methanol.

143 Each fraction eluted from the MIP-SPE cartridge was evaporated to dryness under a stream of
144 nitrogen and the residues were reconstituted in 500 μ L of the UHPLC mobile phase.
145 Extraction recovery was calculated by comparing the peak areas of the analytes from
146 extracted samples with those of control samples corresponding to 100%. Recovery
147 experiments were performed in triplicate.

148
149

150 *2.3.3 Extraction using C₁₈ SPE*

151
152 C₁₈ SPE columns were pre-treated with 4 mL of methanol followed by 10 mL of Milli-Q
153 water. Then, spiked river water samples (100 ml) was loaded on the cartridge with a flow rate
154 of 10 mL min⁻¹ after which the column was dried under vacuum for 20 min. Acetone (3 mL)
155 was used to elute the analytes from the extraction column [24]. The extract was evaporated
156 under a gentle stream of nitrogen and redissolved in 500 μ L of the ultrahigh pressure LC
157 mobile phase.

158
159

160 *2.3.4 ~~2.3.3~~ LC-MS conditions*

161
162 The chromatographic separation of estrogens was performed at 35 °C using isocratic elution.
163 A mobile phase consisting of a mixture of water/acetonitrile/methanol (51:44:5, v/v/v) at 450
164 μ L min⁻¹ flow rate was used. Injection volume was set to 10 μ L. Atmospheric pressure
165 chemical ionization (APCI) interface in the positive (PI) ionization mode was used. Nitrogen
166 (purity > 99.98%) was used as a sheath gas, ion sweep gas and auxiliary gas at flow rates of
167 50, 0 and 40 a.u. (arbitrary units), respectively. The vaporizer temperature was set at 350°C
168 and corona discharge current at 10 μ A. Quantitative analysis was performed using selected
169 reaction-monitoring mode (SRM). Argon was used as collision gas at 1.5mtorr and the
170 optimum collision energy (CE) and the SRM transition with the best signal intensity was used
171 for quantification (**Tab.1**).

172 Matrix-matched standard calibration curves, at seven concentration levels (5 to 1000 ng mL⁻¹)
173 for each compound were obtained by spiking analytes into sample extracts. Good linearity of
174 response by direct injection was obtained for all compounds. The resulting correlation
175 coefficients (R^2) were higher than of 0.999 in all cases. The instrumental detection limits
176 ranged from 8.3 to 25.1 pg injected, based on a signal to noise ratio of 3:1 (**Tab.1**).

177
178
179
180
181
182
183
184
185
186
187
188
189
190
191
192
193
194
195
196
197
198
199
200
201
202
203
204
205
206
207
208
209
210
211
212

3. Results and discussions

3.1 Evaluation of the MIP by LC

Chromatographic evaluation of the imprinted polymer was performed in order to assess the MIP activity. For this purpose, the chromatographic behaviour of β -E2 on the molecularly imprinted polymer packed column was compared with that of the column filled with non imprinted polymer. The choice of the mobile phase is crucial to identify the nature of the interactions involved in the retention process. Thus, different ACN/MeOH mixtures (MeOH content ranging from 0 to 10%) were used as mobile phases to characterize the MIP before SPE applications. β -E2 was totally retained on MIP when using acetonitrile as mobile phase (no elution of β -E2 after 75 min), whereas in NIP control, β -E2 has a retention time of 43 min (data not shown). These results reveal the successful imprinted process. Then, to obtain the optimal selectivity, a further set of experiments was performed using acetonitrile/methanol mixtures. In all polymers, the addition of methanol in the mobile phase resulted in a decrease in retention of β -E2. The highest imprinting factor (IF=3.9) was obtained using a mixture of ACN/MeOH (95:5, v/v), indicating that a moderate increase of the methanol content enhanced the selectivity of the MIP. As it is shown in **Fig.2**, a NIP retention time of 3.2 min for β -E2 whereas this compound was more strongly retained when the MIP polymer was used ($t_{MIP} = 11.2$ min). This behavior reveals the difference in the strength of the interactions between the analyte and the two sorbents. The strong retention of the MIP for β -E2 results from the presence of cavities with high affinity binding sites whereas β -E2 was adsorbed by the NIP through non-specific relative weak interactions which was easily eluted by a mobile phase containing low amounts of a polar protic solvent. This result was further supported by MIP-SPE procedure described below.

3.2 Study of the SPE retention mechanism

To develop the MIP-SPE method for the selective extraction of the selected estrogens in water, experiments for the optimization of conditioning, loading, washing and elution steps were performed. First, MIP performance was evaluated using Milli-Q water. After conditioning the imprinted polymer with 5mL of ACN followed by 5mL of water, a volume of 100 mL of Milli-Q water spiked with 200 ng L⁻¹ of each estrogenic compound were

213 percolated through the MIP. The same experiment was carried out on NIP. Under aqueous
214 condition estrogens are principally retained on the polymer by non-specific interactions such
215 as ionic and hydrophobic. In order to generate specific interactions between the target
216 compounds and the MIP and to disrupt the non-specific interactions between the polymer and
217 apolar matrix components that can be present in real samples, the sorbents were completely
218 dried in vacuum during 5 min and, once the drying step was carried out, 2mL of acetonitrile
219 were applied. A partial elution of the compounds (2-8%) was observed for NIP, while in MIP
220 most of the compounds were completely retained (**Fig.3-w1**). The use of acetonitrile, a polar
221 non protic solvent with a high dielectric constant, allowed the formation of specific
222 interactions via hydrogen bonds between the molecules and the functional monomers. Each
223 molecule displays at least one hydroxyl group able to interact specifically with imprinted
224 cavities. In order to clearly demonstrate the real imprinting effect of the MIP, 2mL of a
225 mixture of acetonitrile/methanol (95:5, v/v) were applied to the polymer in order to disrupt
226 the residual non-specific interactions formed on the MIP and NIP by hydrogen bonds.
227 Estrogens were completely desorbed in the non-imprinted polymer during the
228 acetonitrile/methanol (95:5, v/v) washing step (**Fig.3-w2**) due to the presence of a protic polar
229 solvent such as methanol and to the lack of MIP cavities. In contrast in the MIP most of the
230 compounds were ~~mainly~~ mainly retained and only DIES and DES were partially eluted. This
231 can be explained because this analytes, besides the hydroxyl groups at para positions of the
232 two benzene rings, have quite different chemical structure with a different number of aromatic
233 rings (**Fig.1**). Finally, estrogens were eluted from MIP-SPE with 3x1mL of methanol. The
234 results obtained from the analysis of the elution fractions showed a good recovery for all
235 estrogenic compounds (**Fig.3-E**). High extraction recoveries (>95%) were obtained for E1, β -
236 E2, α -E2, E3, and EE2 demonstrating the effectiveness of the newly prepared MIP. For DES
237 and DIES, lower recoveries were found between 50% and 60%. Although these two
238 compounds were more easily removed than the other estrogenic compounds during the
239 acetonitrile/methanol (95:5, v/v) organic washing step, their MIP recoveries were relatively
240 high. Thus, even if MIP exhibited a lower affinity for these compounds, it is clear that the
241 synthesized polymer can recognize structurally related compounds.

242
243
244
245
246
247

248 3.3 Application of MIP-SPE procedure

249

250 To check the applicability of the developed MIP-SPE for the extraction of the selected
251 estrogens in real matrices, river and tap water samples were collected and submitted to the
252 MIP extraction procedure. In real samples an additional washing step was used in order to
253 remove non-selectively bounded polar matrix components. Thus, after loading, 4mL of a
254 mixture water/acetonitrile (80:20, v/v) followed by 2mL of water were applied to the
255 polymers. As expected, there was no desorption from the MIP-SPE of estrogens during the
256 additional aqueous washing steps (data not shown). Then, the same procedure as described
257 above was applied. **Figure 4** shows the SRM chromatogram corresponding to the injection of
258 the elution fraction after the purification of river water spiked at 100 ng L⁻¹ on MIP. All
259 compounds, including the two isomers of estradiol, were successfully separated in less than 2
260 min.

261 The linearity of the total analytical method, including the MIP-SPE step, was checked by
262 analyzing water samples spiked at different concentrations ranging from 50 to 500 ng L⁻¹.
263 Good linearity of the seven analytes was achieved in both river and tap water with correlation
264 coefficients greater than 0.995 (**Tab.3**). The limits of detection (LODs), defined as the
265 concentrations that yielded S/N ratios greater than or equal to 3, and the limits of
266 quantification (LOQs), defined as the concentrations that yielded S/N ratios greater than or
267 equal to 10, were determined through MIP-SPE extractions of spiked water samples. The
268 LODs ranged from 4.5 to 9.8 ng L⁻¹ whereas LOQs were in the range of 14.9-32.6 ng L⁻¹
269 (**Tab.3**). The recovery, accuracy and precision of the developed MIP-SPE method were
270 calculated in Milli-Q, river and tap water samples at four concentration levels. The recovery
271 values obtained are presented in **Tab.2**. Comparable average recoveries at the different
272 fortification levels were founded in Milli-Q and river water samples varying from 82 (E1) to
273 106% (EE2). Similar results were observed for tap water samples with a mean recovery in the
274 elution fractions ranging from 82 (E1) to 95% (α -E2). For DES and DIES, recoveries between
275 48 and 63% were obtained. These results revealed the ability of MIP to extract estrogens in
276 real water samples without suffering from matrix interferences during the rebinding process
277 of the target compounds. The precision and linearity of the method were satisfactory with
278 repeatability relative standard deviation (RSD) below 8% in all cases.

279 To demonstrate further the potential of the MIP obtained for the extractions of the selected
280 estrogens in real matrices, a comparison between the MIP-SPE and commercially available
281 C₁₈ SPE was performed. The retention of the estrogenic compounds on both sorbents was

282 evaluated under optimal conditions by percolating a river water samples spiked at 50 ng L⁻¹.
283 Resulting elution profiles are described in **Fig.5**. The recoveries of MIP extraction were
284 higher compared with C₁₈ SPE and only DIES and DES were strongly retained on the C₁₈
285 cartridges. However it should be pointed out that the MIP-SPE procedure included also a
286 clean-up step.
287 The results obtained showed that the imprinted sorbent can be a good substitute of the
288 traditional C₁₈ sorbent, revealing the suitability of the method for the selective extraction of
289 natural and synthetic estrogens from river and tap water samples.

290 291 **4. Conclusions**

292
293 In this work, we propose a MIP-SPE procedure for the group-selective extraction of natural
294 and synthetic estrogens (estrone, 17β-estradiol, 17α-estradiol, estriol, 17α-ethinylestradiol,
295 dienestrol and diethylstilbestrol) employing a new molecularly imprinted polymer (MIP) as
296 selective sorbent. The new MIP has high specific recognition selectivity for estrogenic
297 compounds with similar structure. Recovery, precision and accuracy found for the selective
298 extraction of the target analytes from river and tap water samples spiked at concentrations
299 similar to those observed in the aquatic environment allowed to propose this method for the
300 determination of the selected estrogenic compounds at concentrations down to the ng L⁻¹
301 level.

302 303 **Acknowledgments:**

304 This work has been supported by CARBOSORB project [(FP7 Marie Curie Industry-
305 Academia Partnerships and Pathways (IAPP)]. Thanks to POLYINTELL team for their
306 donation of MIP and NIP polymers and SPE cartridges.

307 308 **References:**

- 309
310 [1] M. Holger, K. Ballschmiter, K. Ballschmiter. M. Environ. Sci. Technol. 35 (2001) 3201-3206
311 [2] K. Wanami, T. Shimazu, T. Miyashita, T. Ohara, Bulletin of Tokyo Metropolitan Research
312 Institute for Environmental Protection, (2003) pp 55–62.
313 [3] K. Wanami, T. Shimazu, T. Miyashita, T. Yamamoto, K. Thukada, T. Yoshioka, Bulletin of Tokyo
314 Metropolitan Research Institute for Environmental Protection (2004) pp101-109.
315 [4] T.A. Ternes, U. M. Stumpfa, J. Muellera, K. Haberera, R.-D. Wilkena, M. Servos, Sci Total
316 Environ 225 (1999) 81-90
317 [5] CE. Purdoma, PA. Hardimana, VVJ. Byea, NC. Enoa, CR. Tylerb, JP Sumpterb. Chem. Ecol. 1994,
318 8, 275.
319 [6] V. Pacáková, L. Loukotková, Z. Bosáková, K. Štulík, J. Sep. Sci. 32 (2009) 867-882

- 320 [7] JA. Russell, R. K. Malcolm, K. Campbell. *J. Chromatogr. B* 744 (2000) 157.
- 321 [8] DW. Choi, J. Y. Kim, S. H. Choi, *Food Chrm* 96 (2006) 562
- 322 [9] S. Weber, P. Leushner, P. Kampfer. *Appl. Microbiol. Biotechnol.* 67 (2005) 106.
- 323 [10] S. Wang, W. Huang, G. Fang, Y. Zhang, H. Qiao, *Intern. J. Environ. Anal. Chem.* 88 (2008) 1.
- 324 [11] M.S. Díaz-Cruz, M.J. López de Alda, R. López, D. Barceló, *J. Mass Spectrom.* 38 (2003) 917.
- 325 [12] Y.H. Lin, C.Y. Chen, G.S. Wang, *Rapid Commun. Mass Spectrom.* 21 (2007)1973.
- 326 [13] H.C. Chena, H.W. Kuo, W.H. Ding, *Chemosphere* 74 (2009) 508.
- [14] G. Saravanabhavan, R. Helleur, J. Hellou, *Chemosphere* 76 (2009) 1156.
- [15] M. Farré, M. Kuster, R. Brix, F. Rubio, M.J. López de Alda, D. Barceló. *J. Chromatogr. A.* 1160 (2007) 166.
- 327 [16] L. Sun, W. Yong, X. Chu and J.M. Lin, *J. Chromatogr. A* 28 (2009) 5416.
- 328 [17] Z. Meng, W. Chen, A. Mulchandani, *Environ. Sci. Technol.* 39 (2005) 8958.
- 329 [18] Y. Lin, Y. Shi, M. Jiang, Y. Jin, Y. Peng, B. Lu, K. Dai, *Environ. Pollut.* 153 (2008) 489.
- 330 [19] H. Sanbe, J. Haginaka, *J. Pharm. Biomed. Anal.* 30 (2002) 1835.
- [20] J.C. Bravo, R.M. Garcinuño, P. Fernández, J.S. Durand. *Anal Bioanal Chem* 388 (2007) 1039.
- 331 [21] C. Zhao, Y. Ji, Y. Shao, X. Jiang, H. Zhang, *J Chromatogr A* 1216 (2009) 7546.
- 332 [22] M.D. Celiz, D.S. Aga, L.A. Colón, *Microchemical J* 92 (2009) 174.
- [23] J.C. Bravo, R.M. Garcinuño, P. Fernández, J.S. Durand, *Anal Bioanal Chem.* 393 (2009) 1763.
- 333 [24] T. Benijts, R. Dams, W. Günther, W. Lambert, A. De Leenheer, *Rapid Commun. Mass Spectrom.*
- 334 16 (2002) 1358.
- 335
- 336
- 337

338 **Figure captions**

339

340 **Fig.1.** Selected estrogenic compounds

341

342 **Fig. 2.** Chromatograms of 17 β -estradiol (2.2mM mM) on LC columns filled with non-

343 imprinted (NIP) and imprinted polymer (MIP). Sample volume: 20 μ L. Mobile phase:

344 ACN/MeOH (95:5, v/v). Flow rate:1 mL min⁻¹. Column dimension: 250 mm \times 2.1 mm.

345 Detection at 220 nm. T: 21 $^{\circ}$ C.

346

347 **Fig.3** Elution profiles of the estrogenic compounds obtained on MIP and NIP (100mg of

348 sorbent) in MilliQ-water. W1: 2mL ACN, W2: 2mL ACN/MeOH (95/5, v/v), E: 3mL MeOH

349

350 **Fig. 4.** SRM Chromatogram of estrogens extracted from 100 mL river water spiked at 100 ng

351 L⁻¹

352

353 **Fig. 5.** Comparison of extraction performance between the MIP and C₁₈ in river water

354 samples spiked at 50 ng L⁻¹ of each compound. **Table 1.** LC/APCI-MS-MS parameters for the

355 acquisition of the estrogenic compounds in positive ionization mode

356

357 **Table 1.** LC/APCI-MS-MS parameters for the acquisition of the estrogenic compounds in positive ionization mode

358

359

Compound	Precursor ion (<i>m/z</i>)	Quantitation ion (<i>m/z</i>)	CE (eV)	Tube lens (V)	Confirmation ion (<i>m/z</i>)	CE (eV)	Tube lens (V)	IDL (pg injected)	Linearity range (ng mL ⁻¹)
Estriol	271.2	253.0	12	54	157.0	21	54	24.0	5-1000
17β-estradiol	255.2	159.0	18	76	133.0	20	76	8.3	5-1000
17α-estradiol	255.2	159.0	18	76	133.0	20	76	8.5	5-1000
17α-ethynilestradiol	279.2	133.0	16	50	159.0	19	50	12.5	5-1000
Estrone	271.2	253.0	12	52	133.0	25	52	18.0	5-1000
Diethylstilbestrol	269.2	107.0	32	44	135.0	12	44	25.1	5-1000
Dienestrol	267.2	107.0	23	62	173.0	15	62	24.0	5-1000

360

361

362

363 **Table 2.** Recoveries of selected estrogens in MilliQ, river and tap water samples (n=3)

364

Compound	<i>Recovery (%)</i>											
	<i>MilliQ-water</i>				<i>River water</i>				<i>Tap water</i>			
	Spike (ng L ⁻¹)				Spike (ng L ⁻¹)				Spike (ng L ⁻¹)			
	50	100	150	200	50	100	150	200	50	100	150	200
Estriol	83	87	87	82	82	82	94	93	88	91	82	89
17β-estradiol	96	89	98	101	85	93	91	92	86	93	89	90
17α-estradiol	95	92	97	104	88	93	90	89	95	87	89	89
17α-ethynilestradiol	97	92	98	96	92	99	92	106	92	89	90	87
Estrone	98	94	103	96	94	89	88	95	94	92	85	94
Diethylstilbestrol	47	42	54	60	53	54	49	51	54	48	52	51
Dienestrol	56	53	69	71	50	54	61	63	63	57	61	63

365

366

367

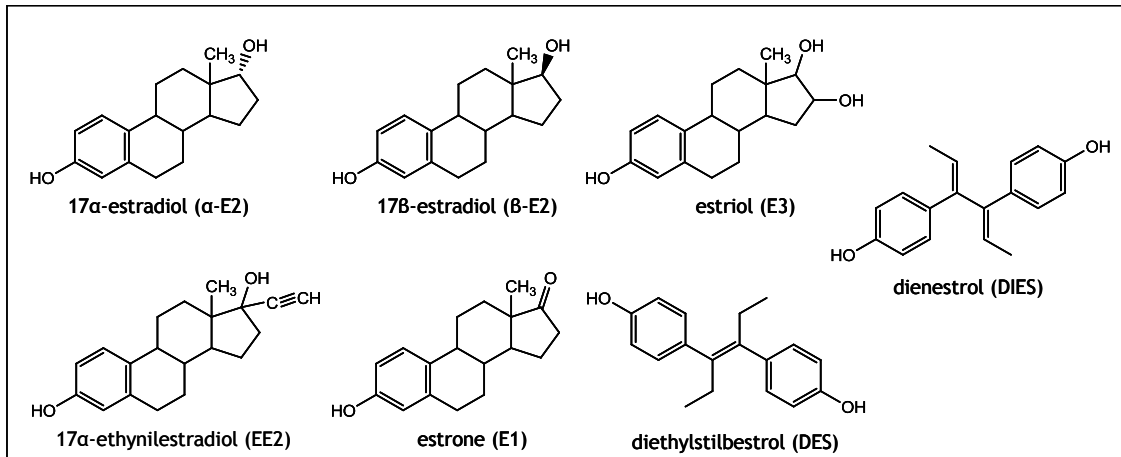
368

369 **Table 3.** Linearity, detection and quantification limits of the MIP-SPE method in MilliQ, river and tap water samples (n=3)
 370

Compound	<i>MilliQ-water</i>			<i>River water</i>			<i>Tap water</i>			Linearity range (ng L ⁻¹)
	LOD (ng L ⁻¹)	LOQ (ng L ⁻¹)	R ²	LOD (ng L ⁻¹)	LOQ (ng L ⁻¹)	R ²	LOD (ng L ⁻¹)	LOQ (ng L ⁻¹)	R ²	
Estriol	6.1	20.3	0.998	7.5	25.0	0.998	7.3	24.3	0.998	50-500
17β-estradiol	4.3	14.3	0.996	5.0	16.6	0.995	4.9	16.3	0.996	50-500
17α-estradiol	4.2	13.9	0.997	4.6	15.3	0.997	4.5	14.9	0.995	50-500
17α-ethynilestradiol	6.1	20.3	0.998	6.5	21.6	0.998	6.4	21.3	0.998	50-500
Estrone	5.7	18.9	0.996	6.0	19.9	0.996	5.8	19.3	0.996	50-500
Diethylstilbestrol	8.5	28.3	0.997	9.8	32.6	0.996	9.8	32.6	0.997	50-500
Dienestrol	8.3	27.6	0.996	9.5	31.6	0.995	9.4	31.2	0.995	50-500

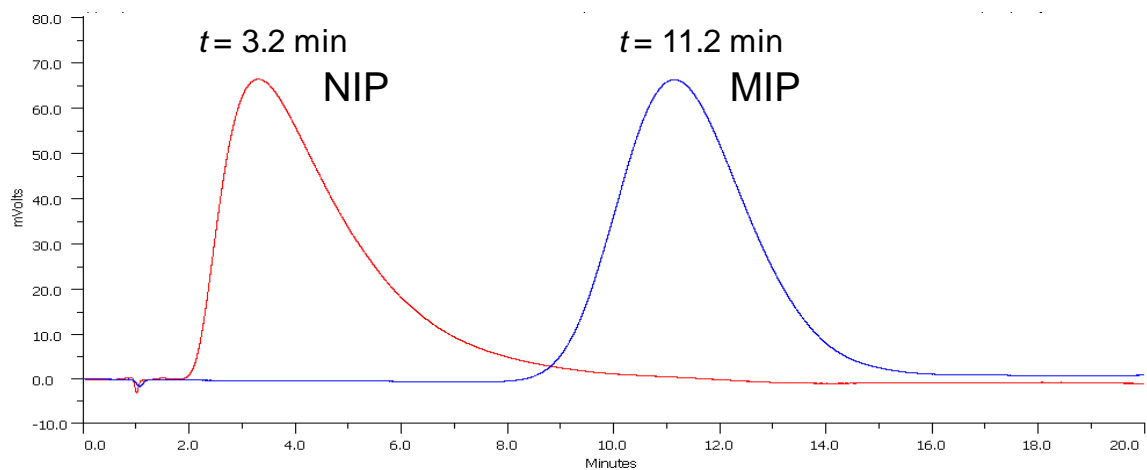
371
 372
 373
 374
 375
 376
 377
 378
 379
 380
 381
 382
 383
 384
 385
 386
 387
 388
 389
 390

392 Figure 1
393



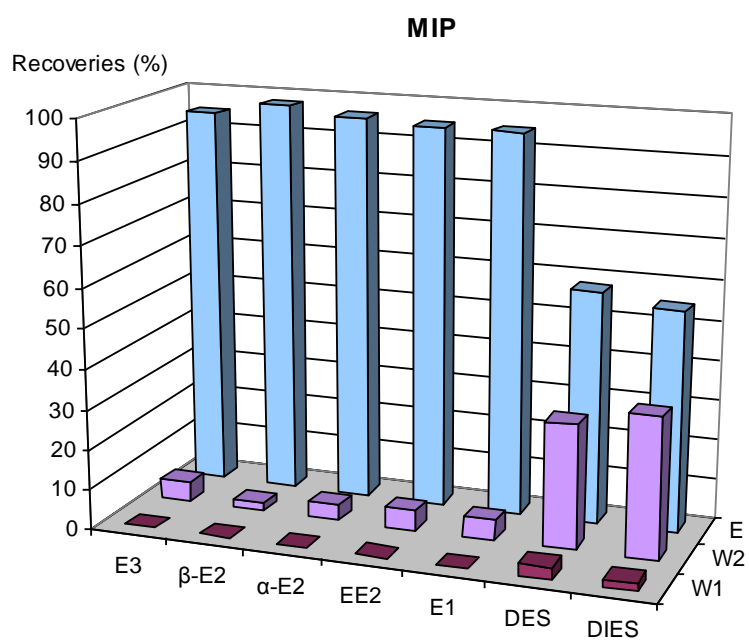
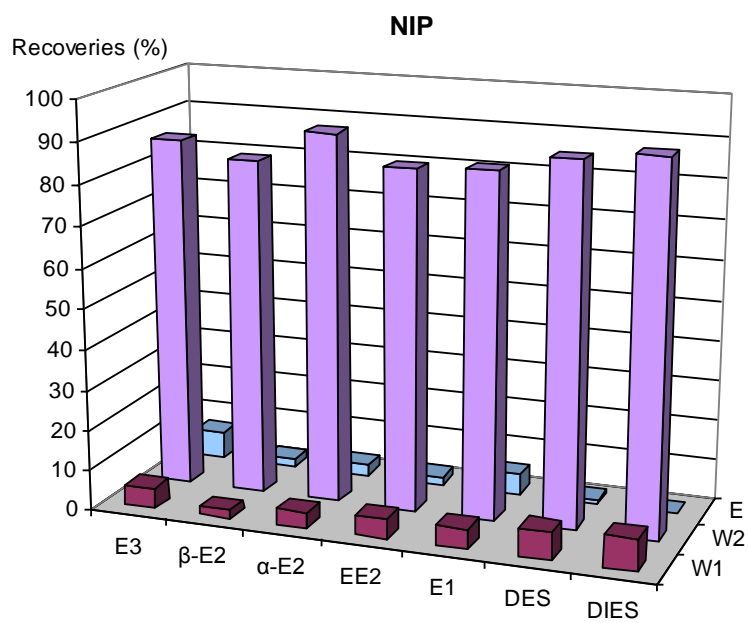
394
395
396
397
398
399
400
401
402
403
404
405
406
407
408
409
410
411
412
413
414
415
416
417
418
419
420
421
422
423
424
425
426
427
428
429
430

431 Figure 2
432



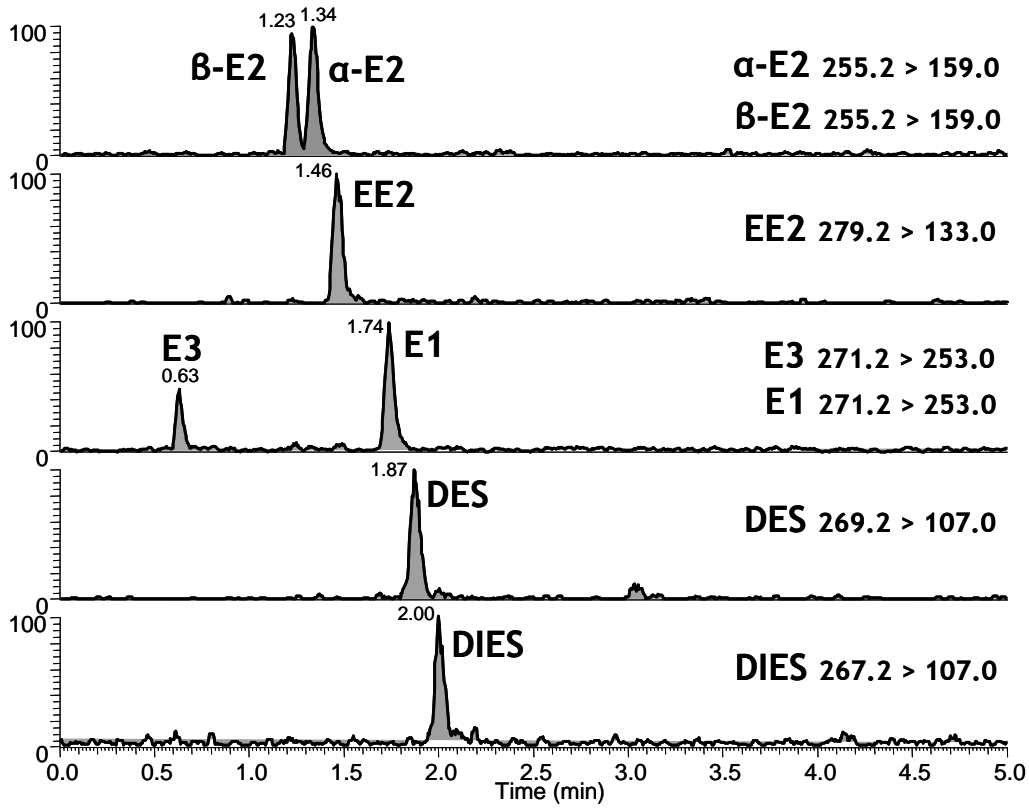
433
434
435
436
437
438
439
440
441
442
443
444
445
446
447
448
449
450
451
452
453
454
455
456
457
458
459
460
461
462
463
464
465
466
467
468

469
470 Figure 3
471



472
473
474
475

476 Figure 4
477



478
479
480
481
482
483
484
485
486
487
488
489
490
491
492
493
494
495
496
497
498
499
500
501
502
503
504

505
506
507
508
509
510
511
512
513
514
515
516
517
518
519
520
521
522
523
524
525
526
527
528
529
530
531
532
533
534
535
536
537
538
539
540
541
542
543
544
545
546
547
548
549
550
551
552
553
554

Figure 5

