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Valimaña, J., et al., 2019, "Enantiomer stability and combined toxicity of duloxetine and econazole on *Daphnia magna* using real concentrations determined by capillary electrophoresis", *Science of the Total Environment*, vol. 670, pp. 770-778.

Available at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2019.03.208>

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*(Article begins on next page)*



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1           **Enantiomer stability and combined toxicity of duloxetine and**  
2                           **econazole on *Daphnia Magna* using real concentrations**  
3                           **determined by capillary electrophoresis**

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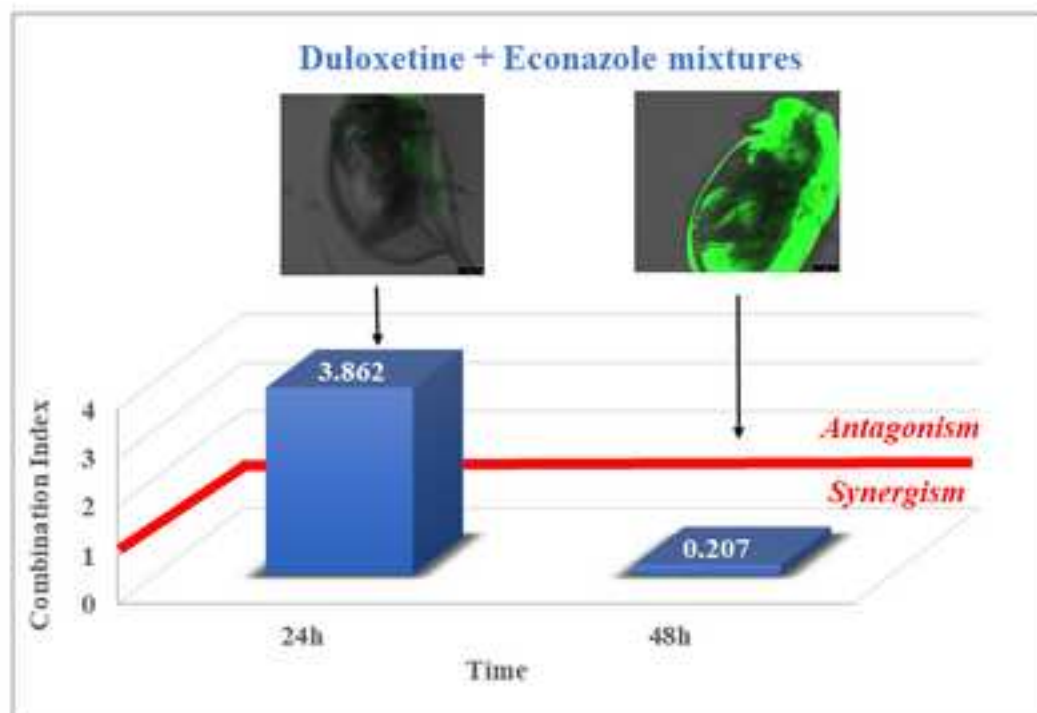
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## Highlights

- Stability of each drug or mixture was evaluated under abiotic and biotic conditions
- Toxicity of both drugs and their mixtures for *Daphnia magna* was established
- Real concentrations of drug enantiomers were determined by chiral CE
- Strong synergism observed for drug mixture at 48 h exposure and any effect level

## 1 **1. Introduction**

2 The wide use of pharmaceuticals for human and animal disease treatment has  
3 originated their presence in the environment and their consideration as emerging  
4 pollutants. A lot of work has been carried out to evaluate the presence of these  
5 pollutants in water or soil samples. However, although the increasing pollution has  
6 mainly impact on ground and surface waters or soils, biota is also affected without  
7 having paid considerable attention to the risk that these emerging pollutants could  
8 suppose for the metabolism and hormonal balance of non-target organisms (**Weber et**  
9 **al., 2016; Sanganyado et al., 2017**) even when they are at as low concentrations as  
10  $\mu\text{g/L}$  and  $\text{ng/L}$  (**Sanderson et al., 2003**).

11 An example of a non-target organism is *Daphnia magna*, a freshwater organism  
12 belonging to the microcrustacean family (**Minguez et al., 2016**) that can be found in  
13 lakes, rivers and rocky pools. Its lifespan depends on the environmental conditions, such  
14 as temperature, food availability (since this organism is fed with algae, bacteria and  
15 detritus), and the presence of pollutants (**Animal Diversity Web, 2014**). *Daphnia*  
16 *magna* is an indicator organism for water quality and it is employed in test of water  
17 toxicity. It is noteworthy to stand out that this organism can degrade chiral compounds  
18 by means of estereospecific enzymatic processes with a variation in their enantiomeric  
19 ratio (**Stanley et al., 2006**). In addition, *Daphnia magna* possesses transparent  
20 physiology (**Paul et al., 1997**) that allows to carry out non-invasive assays in order to  
21 investigate changes in the organism during the toxic process (**Colmorgen and Paul,**  
22 **1995**).

23 Duloxetine (N-methyl-3-(naphthalen-1-yloxy)-3-(thiophen-2-yl)propan-1-  
24 amine) belongs to the family of selective serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake  
25 inhibitors that affect neurotransmitters in order to restore the balance in brain and treat

26 depression and anxiety disorder (**MedicineNet, 1996**). It is a chiral compound that  
27 possesses two active enantiomers although with different activity, being higher the  
28 activity of the S-enantiomer (**Wong et al., 1993**), reason that has originated its  
29 commercialization as pure enantiomer. Econazole (1-[2-[(4-chlorophenyl)methoxy]-2-  
30 (2,4-dichlorophenyl) ethyl] imidazole) is a chiral drug belonging to imidazole family,  
31 with antimicrobial activity, that is widely employed as antifungal in the treatment of  
32 mycosis infections (**Heel et al., 1978**). It is also used in different kinds of ringworm  
33 (**Instituto Químico Biológico, 2004**), being commercialized as racemate although the  
34 antifungal activity has been reported only for the R-enantiomer (**Furuta and Doi,**  
35 **1994**). Stability studies were carried out for pharmaceutical production for duloxetine  
36 and econazole. Duloxetine is degraded under acid, alkaline and neutral hydrolysis  
37 (**Chadha et al., 2016**) and under UV photodegradation (**Datar and Waghmare, 2014**)  
38 and it remains stable under thermal and oxidative stress conditions (**Chadha et al.,**  
39 **2016**). Econazole demonstrated full stability under several stress conditions when  
40 neutral, acidic and alkaline hydrolysis were employed at high temperatures (90°C) as  
41 well as with thermal degradation, showing instability only under oxidation conditions  
42 (**Baker et al., 2016**). Moreover, in the context of environmental studies, it has been  
43 shown that econazole bioaccumulates and has a low biodegradability (**Lindberg et al.,**  
44 **2010; Jean et al., 2012**).

45 Enantiomers of chiral compounds possess identical physical and chemical  
46 properties in a symmetrical environment. However, when they are present in a chiral  
47 biological environment, they can exhibit different enantiospecific biological activity  
48 with differences between the enantiomers that can reach 500-fold in some cases such as  
49  $\beta$ -blockers (**Ma et al., 2014**). The different pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics,  
50 toxicity and degradation rates (**Sanganyado et al., 2017**), confer a high interest to the

51 investigation of the stability and toxicity for the individual enantiomers of chiral drugs  
52 under abiotic and biotic conditions. However, this study requires to have analytical tools  
53 able to determine the individual concentrations of these enantiomers. In this context,  
54 Capillary Electrophoresis (CE) is considered one of the most powerful techniques to  
55 achieve the separation of enantiomers. With this aim, a chiral selector has to be added to  
56 the separation media in the most frequently employed chiral separation mode, which is  
57 Electrokinetic Chromatography.

58 Although Minguéz et al. (Minguéz et al., 2016) studied the ecotoxicity of  
59 duloxetine and econazole on *Daphnia magna*, this study was performed using nominal  
60 and not real concentrations of each drug for the determination of the EC50 values in  
61 solutions containing only one of both drugs and not their mixtures.

62 In this work, real concentrations of duloxetine and econazole were determined  
63 by CE in culture medium for *Daphnia magna* under abiotic and biotic conditions in  
64 order to make possible the individual evaluation of the toxicity of these drugs in single  
65 drug solutions and their mixtures. In addition, the individual estimation of the stability  
66 of drug enantiomers was also carried out in single drug solutions and their mixtures and  
67 under abiotic and biotic conditions.

68

## 69 **2. Materials and methods**

### 70 **2.1. Chemicals**

71 High purity standards (>99%) of (R,S)-duloxetine HCl and of (R,S)-econazole nitrate  
72 were from IS Chemical Technology (Shanghai, China) and from Sigma-Aldrich,  
73 respectively. Sulfated- $\beta$ -CD (S- $\beta$ -CD), sodium hydroxide (NaOH), and orthophosphoric  
74 acid 85% were from Sigma-Aldrich (St. Louis, MO, USA). Hydrochloric acid (HCl)

75 37% and methanol (MeOH) were from Scharlau Chemie (Barcelona, Spain). 2',7'-  
76 dichlorofluorescein diacetate (H<sub>2</sub>DCFDA, ≥97%) was acquired from Sigma Aldrich.  
77 Water used to prepare solutions was purified through a Milli-Q System from Millipore  
78 (Bedford, MA, USA).

## 79 **2.2. Enantiomeric determination of duloxetine and econazole by CE**

80 A HP<sup>3D</sup>CE instrument from Agilent Technologies (Palo Alto, CA, USA) with a diode  
81 array detector (DAD) was employed. The electrophoretic system was controlled by  
82 HP<sup>3D</sup>CE ChemStation software and included the data collection and analysis.  
83 Separations were performed in an uncoated fused-silica capillaries of 50 µm I.D. (375  
84 µm O.D.) with a total length of 58.5 cm (50 cm effective length) purchased from  
85 Polymicro Technologies (Phoenix, AZ, USA). The detection wavelengths were 200 nm  
86 for econazole and 220 nm for duloxetine with a bandwidth of 5 nm, and response time  
87 of 1.0 s when the quantitation of these compounds was achieved. An intermediate  
88 wavelength of 210 nm was also employed to record electropherograms for binary  
89 mixtures of both drugs.

90 The preparation of stock standard solutions of duloxetine and econazole was carried out  
91 by dissolving each compound in MeOH at a 1000 mg/L concentration and diluting with  
92 Milli-Q water to obtained the desired concentration. All solutions were stored at 4 °C  
93 until use, and filtered (through a 0.45 µm pore size nylon filter from Scharlau Chemie)  
94 and degassed (in an ultrasonic bath from Penta Manufacturing Company (Livingston,  
95 NJ, USA)), before use.

96 In order to prepare buffer solutions, the appropriate volume of phosphoric acid was  
97 dissolved in Milli-Q water and the pH was adjusted at pH 3.0 with 1M NaOH. Milli-Q  
98 water was added to complete the volume necessary to reach the desired buffer



99 concentration. The appropriate amount of S- $\beta$ -CD was dissolved in the buffer solution  
100 to obtain the background electrolyte (BGE).

101 When new capillaries were employed, a special procedure was followed which involved  
102 rinsing with MeOH for 5 min, 1 M NaOH for 25 min, Milli-Q water for 5 min followed  
103 by 5 min with 1M HCl (at 1 bar pressure). At the beginning of each working day, the  
104 capillary was conditioned with buffer solution for 20 min and 10 min with the BGE. At  
105 the end of the day, it was flushed with NaOH 0.1 M and Milli-Q water, both of them for  
106 5 min. Between injections, the capillary was flushed with 0.1 M HCl for 2 min, Milli-Q  
107 water for 1 min and BGE for 5 min.

108 The separation and determination of duloxetine and econazole enantiomers were  
109 achieved using a 25 mM phosphate buffer (pH 3.0) containing 1.5% S- $\beta$ -CD at a  
110 temperature of 30°C and reverse polarity at -20 kV. Hydrodynamic injection of standard  
111 solutions and samples was carried out at 50 mbar for 10 s. Seven standard solutions for  
112 duloxetine racemate (2, 12, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 mg/L) and six for econazole racemate (6,  
113 8, 12, 15, 18, 20 mg/L) were employed for quantitation of both compounds using the  
114 external calibration method. Calibration by the standard addition method was achieved  
115 by adding similar concentrations employed for external calibration to culture medium  
116 samples for *Daphnia magna*. Comparison of slope values for both calibration methods  
117 was performed using Statgraphics Centurion XVI (**Statgraphics Centurion, 2013**)  
118 which was also employed for other statistical data analysis.

### 119 **2.3. Biological material and pre-culture conditions**

120 *Daphnia magna* eggs and concentrated solution for nutritive medium were  
121 obtained from the MicroBio Tests Inc. (Belgium).

122 Eggs were incubated in the nutritive medium at a temperature of  $20\pm 1$  °C with a  
123 continuous illumination at 6000 lux inside a growth chamber acquired from IBERCEX,  
124 S.L. (Spain), with the aim of achieving the hatching.

125 The stability of duloxetine and econazole was evaluated under abiotic and biotic  
126 conditions using toxicant concentrations ranging from 3 to 30 mg/L. The abiotic runs  
127 were carried out in the absence of daphnids, in order to evaluate the possible hydrolysis  
128 of compounds into aqueous reaction media and the effect of the variation of any  
129 physico-chemical parameter. Concentration of each contaminant in the liquid fraction  
130 was determined at the beginning (0 h) and along the exposure time (24, 48 and 72 h).  
131 Each assay condition was replicated three times.

#### 132 **2.4. Toxicity tests**

133 Once the eggs hatching was carried out, toxicity bioassays with neonates of 24 h  
134 of lifetime were developed in accordance with the international standard OECD 202  
135 Guideline (OECD, 2004). The experiments were conducted in plates containing 5  
136 neonates and 10 mL of culture media supplemented with either no added toxicants  
137 (Control) and predefined concentration of toxicants, per quadruplicate, being all sets of  
138 experiments conducted under darkness. Both pollutants were first assayed in the range  
139 0.1-20 mg/L and mixtures were tested based on the EC50 values of the individual  
140 components at 24 h of exposure. Acute toxicity was expressed by the EC50 value, being  
141 this the concentration provoking the immobilization of 50% of organisms during the  
142 exposure time (24, 48 and 72 h), using the control experiment as the reference with 0%  
143 of inhibition.

#### 144 **2.5. Evaluation of oxidative stress**

145 The toxicity of the target compounds was also evaluated in terms of Reactive Oxygen  
146 Species (ROS) amount produced in *D. magna* by H<sub>2</sub>DCFDA assay (**Galdiero et al.,**  
147 **2017**). In brief, after exposure to toxicants at the EC<sub>50</sub> concentration, as previously  
148 described in section 2.4, 10 daphnids were taken and incubated with 1 mL of 10 mM  
149 H<sub>2</sub>DCFDA for 2 h at 20°C in the dark. ROS level was monitored by fluorescence  
150 (excitation wavelength of 350 nm and emission wavelength of 600 nm) using a  
151 Confocal Microscope Leica TCS SP5 (Germany).

## 152 **2.6. Equations for the evaluation of toxicity parameters**

153 The median-effect/combination index (CI)-isobologram equation, was used the  
154 calculation of toxicity parameters. This equation proposed by Chou and Talalay (**Chou**  
155 **and Talalay, 1984**) is derived from mass-action law:

$$156 \frac{f_a}{1 - f_a} = \left( \frac{D}{D_m} \right)^m$$

157 D is a concentration of drug that provokes damage on a population fraction  $f_a$ .  
158  $D_m$  is the median effective concentration (EC<sub>50</sub>) and the parameter m accounts for the  
159 shape of the same dose-effect curve.

160 EC<sub>50</sub> and m values are used for calculating the CI values; CI <1, =1, and >1  
161 indicate synergism (S), additive effect (Add), and antagonism (A), respectively. EC<sub>10</sub>,  
162 EC<sub>50</sub> and EC<sub>95</sub>, are the doses required to inhibit 10, 50 and 95%, respectively.  
163 Computer software CompuSyn (**Chou and Martin, 2005**) was used for automated  
164 calculation and simulation.

165 To the evaluation of the combined effect of duloxetine and econazole, it was  
166 tested mixtures of pollutants in 1:1 fixed constant ratio based on the EC<sub>50</sub> values of

167 single drugs for 24h of exposition time, over a wide range of effect levels. Calculation  
168 of the CI values was done according to the combination index equation (Chou, 2006):

$$169 \quad (CI)_x^n = \sum_j^n \frac{(D)_j}{(D_x)_j} = \sum_{j=1}^n \frac{(D_x)_{1-n} \left\{ \frac{D_j}{\sum_1^n [D]} \right\}}{(D_m)_j \left\{ \frac{(f_{ax})_j}{[1 - (f_{ax})_j]} \right\}^{1/m_j}}$$

170 Where  $(CI)_x^n$  is the combination index for n chemicals at a certain x% inhibition (e.g.,  
171 mobility of daphnids),  $(D_x)_{1-n}$  is the sum of the concentrations of n toxicants exerting  
172 x% of inhibition in combination  $\{[D]_j / \sum_1^n [D]\}$  is the ratio of a given (j) drug inducing  
173 a x% inhibition in combination and  $(D_m)_j \left\{ \frac{(f_{ax})_j}{[1 - (f_{ax})_j]} \right\}^{1/m_j}$  is the dose of each  
174 compound alone producing the same effect. CI indicates additivity (CI = 1), synergism  
175 (CI < 1) or antagonism (CI > 1). The calculations were performed using CompuSyn  
176 software (Chou and Martin, 2005).

177

### 178 3. Results and discussion

#### 179 3.1 Analytical characteristics of the CE method employed for the simultaneous 180 determination of duloxetine and econazole enantiomers

181 In a previous work of our research team (Valimaña-Traverso et al., 2019) a CE  
182 method was optimized enabling the simultaneous enantiomeric separation of duloxetine  
183 and econazole in 7.5 min with enantiomeric resolutions of 7.9 and 6.5, respectively. The  
184 experimental conditions employed are detailed in Materials and Methods (see section  
185 2.2). In order to assure the adequate performance of this method to analyse duloxetine  
186 and econazole enantiomers in the culture medium samples employed in this work under  
187 abiotic and biotic conditions, the analytical characteristics of this method were  
188 evaluated. As linearity was assessed in our previous work using standard solutions

189 (linear range from 1.8 to 60 mg/L for duloxetine and from 4.8 to 20 mg/L for  
190 econazole), in this work, precision, accuracy, LOD and LOQ, and the existence of  
191 matrix interferences were evaluated using the culture medium of *Daphnia magna* under  
192 abiotic and biotic conditions. To assess method variability related to the incubation  
193 process with duloxetine and econazole mixtures in the culture medium of *Daphnia*  
194 *magna*, precision was expressed as repeatability and intermediate precision at two  
195 concentration levels. As shown in Table 1, repeatability (expressed as RSD values) was  
196 better than 1.3 % for migration times and lower than 2.5 % for corrected peak areas,  
197 both for duloxetine and econazole enantiomers. RSD values obtained for intermediate  
198 precision were lower than 1.6 % for migration times and 2.8 % for corrected peak areas  
199 for drug enantiomers. The study of matrix interferences was carried out by comparison  
200 of the slopes obtained by the external and the standard addition calibration methods. No  
201 statistically significant differences existed ( $p$  value>0.05) between these slope values  
202 showing the absence of matrix interferences and the possibility of using the external  
203 calibration method for the quantitation of duloxetine and econazole enantiomers (see  
204 Table 1). Finally, average recovery values at two concentrations levels ranged from 98  
205 to 102 % for duloxetine and from 98 to 104 % for econazole assuring method accuracy,  
206 and LOD and LOQ values were close to 0.4 and 1.3 mg/L for duloxetine enantiomers  
207 and close to 1.1 and 3.6 mg/L for econazole enantiomers, respectively.

### 208 **3.2 Stability of duloxetine and econazole enantiomers and their mixtures**

209 The stability of duloxetine and econazole enantiomers was evaluated in individual  
210 solutions of each drug under abiotic and biotic conditions. It was observed that the  
211 variations of duloxetine concentrations were negligible in any case while econazole was  
212 not stable disappearing after incubation with the culture medium and in the presence of  
213 daphnis (results not shown). Similar results were obtained for econazole when mixtures

214 of duloxetine and econazole enantiomers were incubated under abiotic and biotic  
215 conditions (Figures 1C and 1D). However, stability profiles for racemic duloxetine and  
216 each of its enantiomers were different in mixtures of both drugs after 72 h incubation  
217 under abiotic (Figure 2A) and biotic conditions (Figure 2B) and different racemate  
218 initial nominal concentrations. It was observed that in absence of *Daphnia magna*, the  
219 concentration of each duloxetine enantiomer is stable with variations lower than 0.4%  
220 of the initial nominal concentration (see Figure 2A). Nevertheless, in the presence of  
221 *Daphnia magna*, a concentration decay was observed for racemic duloxetine as well as  
222 for the individual enantiomers (Figure 2B). Decay percentages for duloxetine  
223 enantiomers ranged from 46 to 77 % depending on the initial nominal concentrations  
224 assayed. In fact, for the lowest initial nominal concentrations (3 and 7 mg/L racemate),  
225 duloxetine concentrations after incubation could not be determined because they were  
226 lower than the LOQ of the analytical method.

### 227 **3.3. Toxicity of duloxetine and econazole mixtures.**

228 The toxicity of mixtures of duloxetine and econazole on *Daphnia magna* was  
229 determined for the first time in this work, and compared with the toxicity evaluated for  
230 single drug solutions. Table 2 groups the values of the toxicity parameters for the  
231 mixtures and the single solution of each drug, in both cases for 24, 48 and 72 h of  
232 exposure time. Real concentrations determined by CE were employed for calculations  
233 for both drugs although in the case of econazole only initial concentrations could be  
234 used since this drug disappeared after incubation. It can be observed that EC50 values  
235 measured for single drug solutions decreased with the incubation time for both  
236 compounds. In fact, EC50 values were a 73% lower for duloxetine and a 36 % for  
237 econazole at 48 h incubation time referred to the typical reference time for *Daphnia*  
238 *magna* mobility test (24 h incubation time). Decreases of 82 % and 85 % were observed

239 for duloxetine and econazole, respectively, when an incubation time of 72 h is  
240 considered. These results show the high toxicity of duloxetine and econazole according  
241 to the European Regulation EC 1272/2008 (EC, 2008), although duloxetine toxicity was  
242 higher than that of econazole. EC50 values obtained in this work could be compared  
243 with those determined previously by other authors but only for 48 h incubation time  
244 (Minguez et al., 2016). In the case of duloxetine, an EC50 value of 3.35 mg/L was  
245 previously reported (Minguez et al., 2016) which was considerably higher than that  
246 obtained in this work (0.12 mg/L). However, differences for EC50 values were lower in  
247 the case of econazole (0.4 and 0.24 mg/L in (Minguez et al., 2016) and in this work,  
248 respectively). The highest differences in the EC50 values for duloxetine with respect to  
249 the previous work (Minguez et al., 2016) could be explained by the use of real  
250 concentrations determined in this work by CE while nominal concentrations were used  
251 for calculations in the previous work. In fact, these differences in EC50 values  
252 decreased for econazole for which initial concentrations were used in this work as this  
253 drug disappeared as explained above.

254 Regarding the mixtures of duloxetine and econazole, EC50 values decreased when  
255 increasing the incubation time, as previously observed for the single solution of each  
256 drug, with EC50 values up to 98 % lower than that obtained for 24 h (see Table 2).  
257 Table 2 also shows the higher toxicity of the mixtures at 48 h incubation time compared  
258 with the single drug solutions. Regarding the combination index, Figure 3 shows that  
259 this parameter is lower than 1 at any effect level for 48 h incubation time (Fig. 3B)  
260 contrary to that observed for 24 (Fig. 3A) and 72 h (Fig. 3C) showing the synergism  
261 existing between both drugs at 48 h incubation time. At short exposure times (Fig. 3A),  
262 the interaction profile is different from that obtained at 48 h with synergism effect only  
263 until 0.3 effect level. Similarly, Fig. 3C shows that synergism occurs up to 0.75 effect

264 level with antagonism appearing when increasing this variable. These results showing  
265 the different interaction profiles for the drug studied in this work with *Daphnia magna*  
266 agree with those previously obtained by our research team for the same compounds and  
267 the aquatic plant *Spirodela polyrhiza* (Valimaña-Traverso et al., 2019) and also for  
268 other organisms (green alga, cyanobacteria (González-Pleiter et al., 2013), and  
269 biological activated sludge (Amariei et al., 2017), and other drug mixtures such as a  
270 combination of five antibiotics (amoxicillin, erythromycin, levofloxacin, norfloxacin and  
271 tetracycline) (González-Pleiter et al., 2013), and a binary mixture containing an  
272 antimicrobial (triclosan) and a non-steroidal antiinflammatory drug (ibuprofen)) (Amariei  
273 et al., 2017) using in all these cases the combination index model. Moreover, using a  
274 different model (Concentration Addition (CA)), deviations observed from predictions,  
275 suggested a synergistic effect for duloxetine in mixtures with other eight antidepressants  
276 when two different green algae were studied (Minguez et al., 2018). Traditional CA  
277 and Independent Action (IA) models, predict the toxicity of a mixture based on the  
278 effect of individual components, and consider deviations from additivity (antagonism  
279 and synergy) toxicologically irrelevant and corresponding to unusual situations  
280 (Backhaus, et al., 2003; European Commission, 2011). However, the results obtained in  
281 this work, together with those reported in our previous works (González-Pleiter et al.,  
282 2013, Amariei et al., 2017) show that deviations from additivity exist and can be strong  
283 in many systems.

284 Toxicity of duloxetine, econazole and their mixtures was also investigated by evaluating  
285 the oxidative stress on *Daphnia magna* using a biochemical marker and fluorescence  
286 images as described in section 2.5. The results obtained are shown in Figure 4. A light  
287 stress (background fluorescence) was observed in control assays at 24 and 48 h of  
288 incubation without toxicants probably due to changes in aqueous media when



289 H<sub>2</sub>DCFDA was added and to the handling of the crustaceans for confocal microscopy  
290 observation. No increase on the fluorescence was detected at 24 h incubation time for  
291 the mixture supporting the above-mentioned comments on the antagonistic effect of this  
292 mixture at EC50 concentration value contrary to what it was observed at 48 h exposure  
293 time (see Table 2). However, as shown in Fig. 4, a considerable increase of fluorescence  
294 was observed with the exposure time also corroborating the above-mentioned results on  
295 the toxicity of these compounds as illustrated in Table 2. In fact, the highest increase in  
296 fluorescence took place for duloxetine at 48 h exposure time and for the mixture of both  
297 drugs at the same exposure time. Moreover, a widespread distribution of fluorescence  
298 occurred within the daphnids body, regardless of the compounds tested and the exposure  
299 time, contrasting this distribution with that reported when *Daphnia magna* was exposed  
300 to metallic nanoparticles (Galdiero et al., 2017). In this case, the increase in  
301 fluorescence was limited to the gastrointestinal tract and broad egg chamber of daphnis.  
302 Other authors reported previously oxidative stress for *Daphnia magna* induced by  
303 pharmaceuticals (Gómez-Oliván et al., 2014a; Gómez-Oliván et al., 2014b) although  
304 duloxetine and econazole were not investigated in any case.

305 The results obtained in this work are the first described for mixtures of duloxetine and  
306 econazole using the microcrustacean *Daphnia magna*. No previous results were  
307 reported for comparison.

308

#### 309 **4. Conclusions**

310 The stability of duloxetine and econazole enantiomers in individual solutions and their  
311 mixtures under the ecotoxicity test conditions for *Daphnia magna* was evaluated for the  
312 first time in this work. Results showed that the variations of duloxetine concentrations

313 were negligible in any case in single solutions while the stability profiles for racemic  
314 duloxetine and each of its enantiomers were different in mixtures of both drugs after 72  
315 h incubation. Decay percentages for duloxetine enantiomers ranged from 46 to 77 %  
316 depending on the initial nominal concentrations. However, econazole was not stable  
317 disappearing after incubation and this was true for single solutions and mixtures of both  
318 drugs. The toxicity of the mixtures of duloxetine and econazole was determined on  
319 *Daphnia magna* for the first time in this work and compared with the toxicity of single  
320 solutions. Mixtures at 48 h incubation time showed a high toxicity and synergism at any  
321 effect level which should be taken into account when evaluating environmental risk in  
322 aquatic ecosystems. A good correlation was observed between toxicity parameters  
323 calculated by the ecotoxicity test and the interaction profiles, and the fluorescence  
324 images obtained for *Daphnia magna* using a reactive oxygen species biochemical  
325 marker. Real drug concentrations were determined by CE in this work which could  
326 justify the big differences observed for EC50 values obtained for duloxetine with  
327 respect to the only EC50 value reported for this drug in the bibliography in a single  
328 solution.

### 329 **Acknowledgements**

330 M.L.M., M.A.G, J.V.T. thank the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (Spain)  
331 for projects CTQ2013-48740-P and CTQ2016-76368-P. J.V.T. thanks the same  
332 Ministry for his predoctoral contrat (BES-2014-070532). G.A. and K.B. thank financial  
333 support from the Dirección General de Universidades e Investigación de la Comunidad  
334 de Madrid (Spain), Research Network S2013/MAE-2716 and ICTS “NANBIOSIS”,  
335 Confocal Microscopy Service: Ciber in Bioengineering, Biomaterials & Nanomedicine  
336 (CIBER-BNN) at the Alcalá University (CAI Medicine Biology). G.A. thanks the  
337 University of Alcalá for her pre-doctoral contract.

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#### 443 **Table Legends.**

444 **Table 1.** Precision, study on the existence of matrix interferences, LOD, LOQ, and  
445 accuracy of the CE method, evaluated using the culture medium of *Daphnia magna*  
446 under abiotic and biotic conditions.

447 **Table 2.** Dose-effect relationship parameters and mean combination index (CI) values  
448 of duloxetine (D), econazole (E) and their mixtures for toxicity tests.

449 **Figure Captions**

450 **Figure 1.** Electropherograms corresponding to the analysis of a mixture of duloxetine  
451 and econazole racemates at racemic concentrations of 20 mg/L of each drug in: A) an  
452 aqueous standard solution; B) culture medium at zero time; C) culture medium at 72 h  
453 incubation (abiotic conditions); D) culture medium in presence of *Daphnia magna* at 72  
454 h incubation. Experimental conditions: 25 mM phosphate buffer (pH 3.0) with a 1.5%  
455 S- $\beta$ -CD at a temperature of 30°C and a separation voltage of -20 kV; detection at  $\lambda = 210$   
456 nm; effective capillary length 50 cm, internal diameter 50  $\mu\text{m}$ , hydrodynamic injection  
457 50 mbar x 10 s.

458 **Figure 2.** Stability profiles for racemic duloxetine and its enantiomers after 72 h  
459 incubation under abiotic (A) and biotic conditions (B) in mixtures of duloxetine and  
460 econazole at different initial nominal concentrations of both racemic drugs. Each  
461 percentage is the average of three results. Error bars correspond to a 95% confidence  
462 interval.

463 **Figure 3.** Combination index calculated for different effect levels in binary mixtures of  
464 duloxetine and econazole at different exposition times: A) 24 h., B) 48 h., C) 72 h. Error  
465 bars correspond to a 95% confidence interval.

466 **Figure 4.** Fluorescence images of *Daphnia magna* after 24 h and 48 h of exposure to  
467 duloxetine, econazole and their mixtures at their specific EC50 values.



Table 1

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**Table 1.** Precision, study on the existence of matrix interferences, LOD, LOQ, and accuracy of the CE method, evaluated using the culture medium of *Daphnia magna* under abiotic and biotic conditions.

	Duloxetine				Econazole			
	Enantiomer 1		Enantiomer 2		Enantiomer 1		Enantiomer 2	
<b>Precision<sup>1</sup></b>								
Concentration (mg/L)	<b>2</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Repeatability (n=6)<sup>2</sup></b>								
t <sub>m</sub> , RSD (%)	0.3	1.0	0.8	1.3	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.3
A <sub>c</sub> , RSD (%)	1.0	2.5	1.2	2.5	2.0	2.3	2.4	2.2
<b>Intermediate precision (n=9)<sup>3</sup></b>								
t <sub>m</sub> , RSD (%)	0.4	1.2	0.9	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.6
A <sub>c</sub> , RSD (%)	1.1	2.8	1.4	2.7	2.1	2.6	2.8	2.4
<b>Standard additions calibration method (n=6)</b>								
Range (mg/L)	<b>1-30</b>				<b>3-10</b>			
Equation (bx ± a)	0.361x - 0.202		0.370x - 0.270		0.396x - 0.878		0.372x - 0.784	
Standard errors	S <sub>a</sub> =0.154, S <sub>b</sub> =0.012		S <sub>a</sub> =0.194, S <sub>b</sub> =0.016		S <sub>a</sub> =0.048, S <sub>b</sub> =0.007		S <sub>a</sub> =0.044, S <sub>b</sub> =0.006	
Correlation coefficient (r)	0.9982		0.9972		0.9976		0.9977	
a ± t x S <sub>a</sub>	-0.202±0.490		-0.270±0.617		-0.878 ± 0.133		-0.784 ± 0.122	
b ± t x S <sub>b</sub>	0.361±0.038		0.370±0.051		0.396 ± 0.019		0.372 ± 0.017	
<b>LOD (mg/L)</b>	0.3		0.4		1.0		1.1	
<b>LOQ (mg/L)</b>	1.0		1.3		3.3		3.6	
<b>Accuracy</b>								
<b>Study of matrix interferences p-value of t test</b>	0.5528		0.8285		0.8765		0.5925	
Concentration (mg/L)	<b>2</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Recovery (%)</b>	98 ± 3	101 ± 4	100 ± 1	102 ± 5	102 ± 5	98 ± 4	101 ± 3	104 ± 6

<sup>1</sup> Precision: This variability included the incubation process with duloxetine and econazole mixtures in culture medium of *Daphnia magna* organisms. <sup>2</sup> Six consecutive injections of the culture medium of *Daphnia magna* with a mixture of duloxetine and econazole racemates. <sup>3</sup> Three replicates of the culture medium of *Daphnia magna* with a mixture of duloxetine and econazole racemates were injected in triplicate.

a: intercept; b: slope; S<sub>a</sub>: intercept standard deviation; S<sub>b</sub>: slope standard deviation; Confidence interval at 95% as confidence level (n = 9); Enantiomer1: first-migrating enantiomer; Enantiomer2: second-migrating enantiomer; A<sub>c</sub>: corrected peak area; t<sub>m</sub>: migration time; LOD: limit of detection; LOQ: limit of quantification.

Table 2

[Click here to download Table: Table 2.doc](#)**Table 2.** Dose-effect relationship parameters and mean combination index (CI) values of duloxetine (D), econazole (E) and their mixtures for toxicity tests.

SINGLE TOXICANT						
Exposure time (h)	Duloxetine			Econazole		
	Dose-effect parameters			Dose-effect parameters		
	EC <sub>50</sub> (mg/L)	m	r	EC <sub>50</sub> (mg/L)	m	r
24	0.45±0.01	1.0±0.1	0.98	0.73±0.02	3±1	0.90
48	0.12±0.01	0.8±0.2	0.89	0.24±0.01	1.6±0.3	0.93
72	0.08±0.01	0.9±0.2	0.96	0.11±0.01	1.7±0.4	0.96
BINARY COMBINATION DULOXETINE AND ECONAZOLE						
Exposure time (h)	Dose-effect parameters			IC values		
	EC <sub>50</sub> (mg/L)	m	r	EC <sub>10</sub>	EC <sub>50</sub>	EC <sub>95</sub>
	24	2.52±0.02	0.43±0.02	0.98	<b>0.09</b> ±0.01	3.86±0.05
48	0.04±0.01	1.6±0.8	0.90	<b>0.39</b> ±0.02	<b>0.21</b> ±0.01	<b>0.15</b> ±0.02
72	0.07±0.01	1.8±0.6	0.91	1.07±0.01	<b>0.67</b> ±0.02	<b>0.50</b> ±0.03

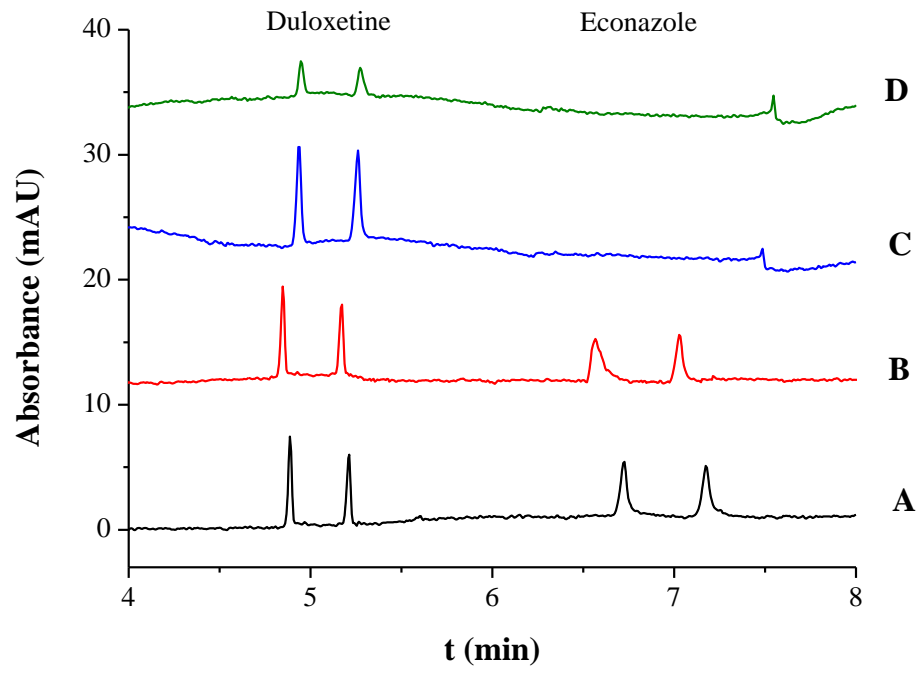


Figure 1.

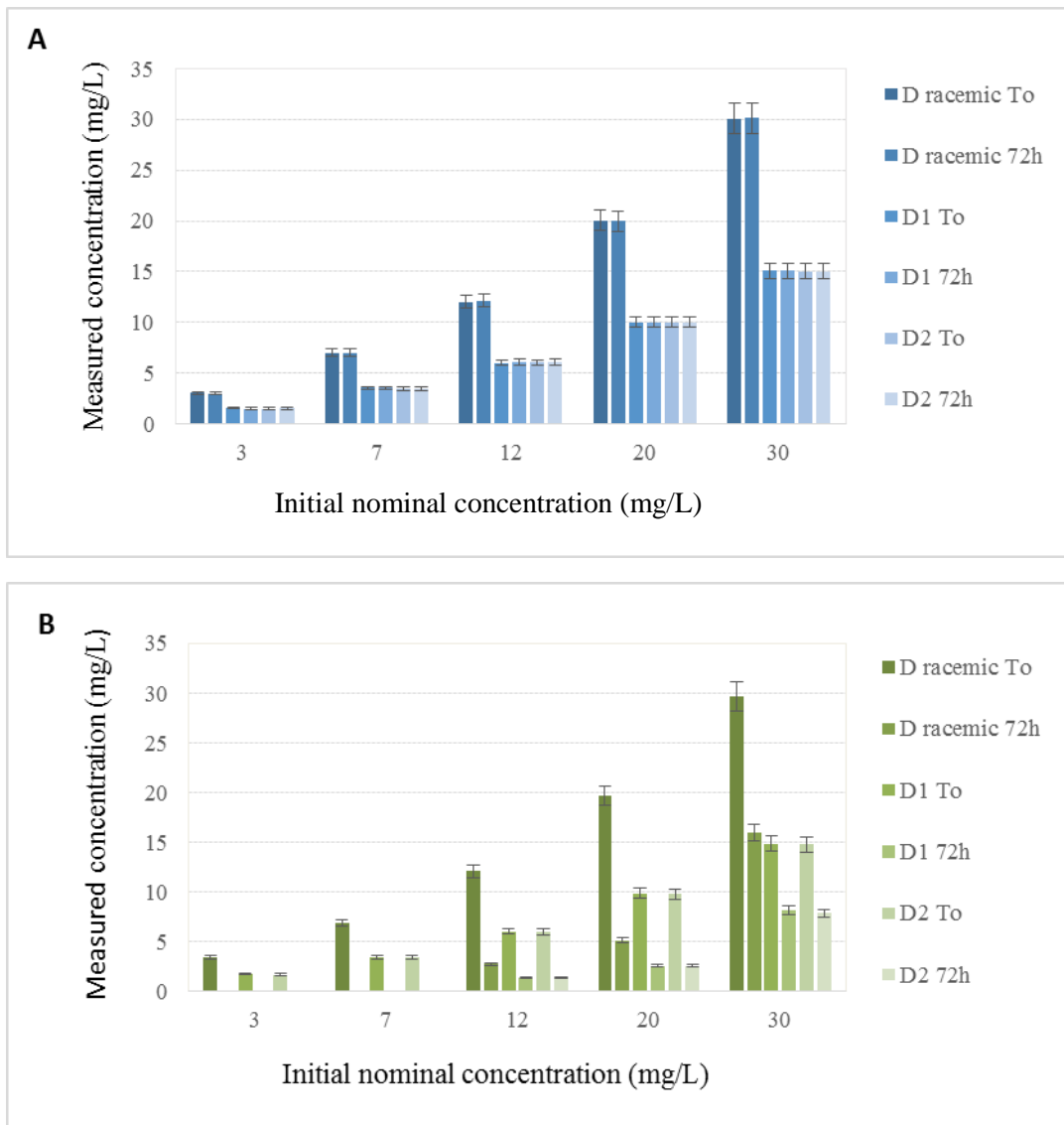


Figure 2.

Figure 3  
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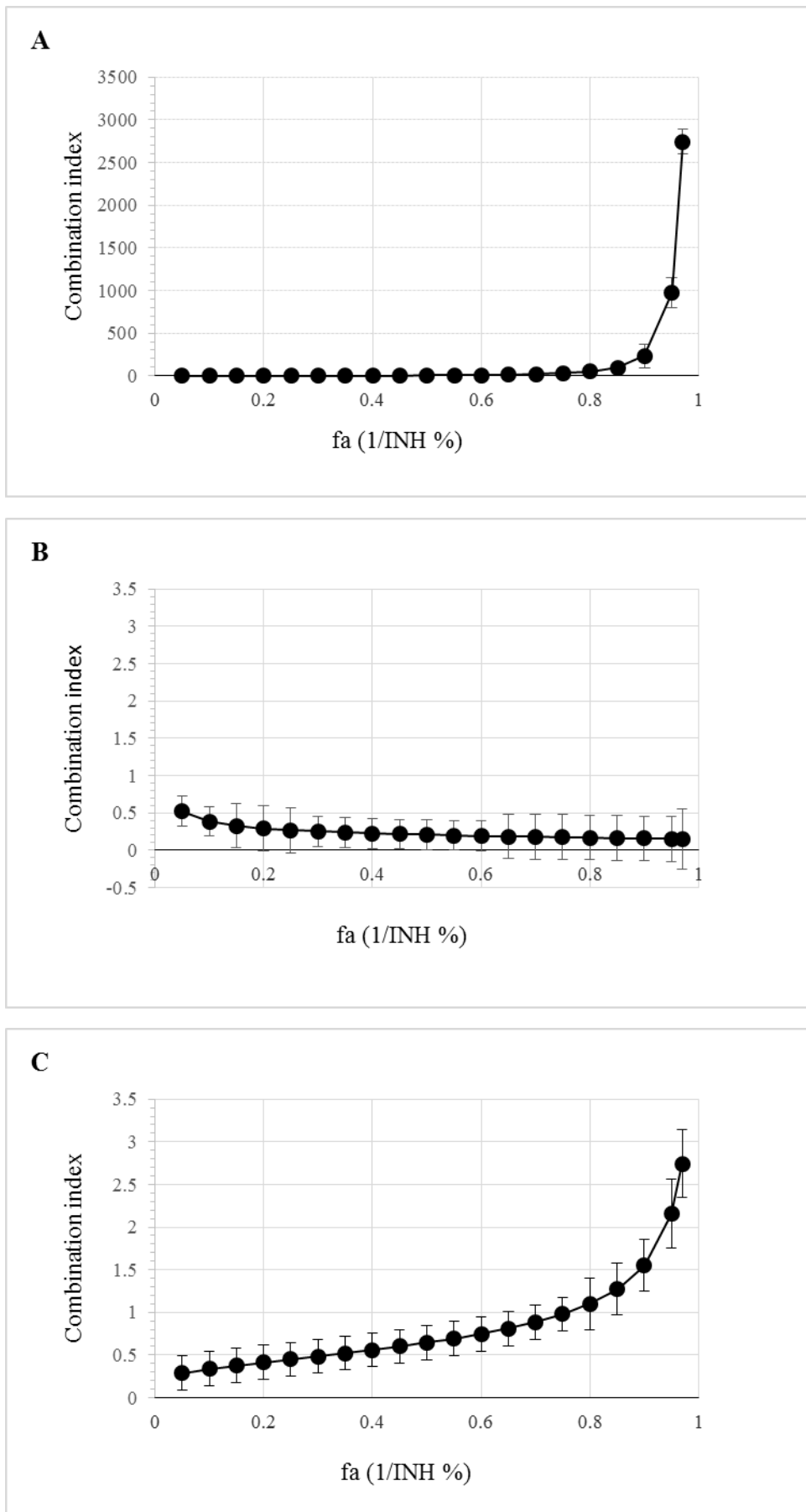
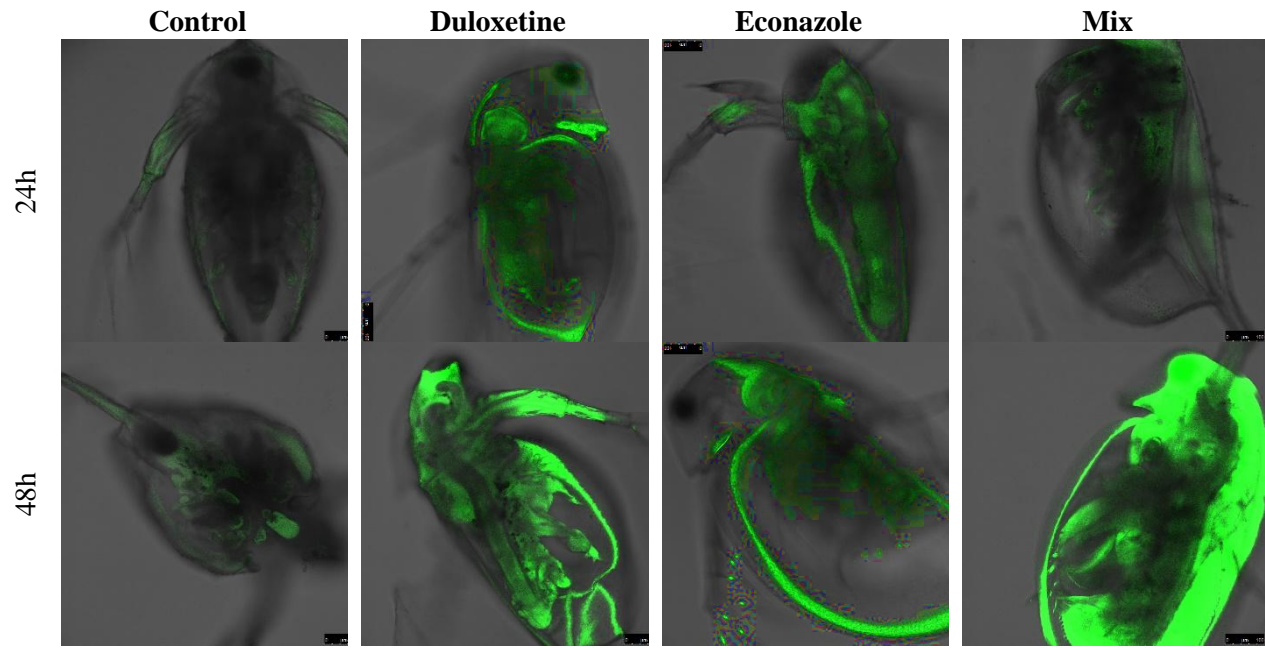


Figure 3.



**Figure 4.**