

Membrane Distillation for the Removal of Fluoride and Pesticides in Remote Areas in India

by

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Certificate of original authorship

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Table of contents

Certificate of original authorship.....	II
Acknowledgements.....	III
Journal articles published	IV
Conference Papers and Presentations	IV
Table of contents	V
List of abbreviations.....	IX
List of symbols.....	XI
List of illustrations	XII
Abstract	XIV
1. Introduction	2
1.1. Background of research.....	2
1.1.1. Global fresh water demand.....	2
1.1.2. Fresh water supply for remote areas	2
1.1.3. Membrane distillation.....	2
1.2. Objective of this research	3
1.3. Outline of this study	4
2. Literature review	6
2.1. Introduction.....	6
2.2. Microbial and chemical contaminants in groundwater in India.....	6
2.2.1. Microbial contamination	6
2.2.2. Pesticide contamination.....	7
2.2.3. Nitrate contamination.....	12
2.2.4. Fluoride contamination	13
2.2.5. Arsenic contamination	15
2.2.6. Iron contamination	15
2.2.7. Salinization of groundwater	16
2.3. Small scale water treatment technologies.....	17

2.4.	Membrane Distillation	19
2.4.1.	MD configuration	20
2.4.2.	Transfer mechanisms	22
2.4.3.	MD in Drinking Water Production.....	23
2.4.4.	Challenges in MD application	25
2.4.5.	Scaling and fouling phenomena in drinking water production.....	26
2.5.	Conclusions.....	28
3.	Material and Methods.....	30
3.1.	Chemicals and solutions.....	30
3.1.1.	Feed solutions fluoride experiments	30
3.1.2.	Feed solutions pesticide experiments	31
3.1.3.	Selected pesticides.....	32
3.2.	Experimental setup.....	36
3.2.1.	Bench scale DCMD unit.....	36
3.2.2.	Pilot DCMD unit.....	37
3.2.3.	Rapid small scale column test	38
3.3.	Experimental protocols	42
3.3.1.	Optimum operation conditions for MD.....	42
3.3.2.	Performance measurement methods.....	42
3.3.3.	Membrane cleaning	43
3.3.4.	Calculation of volume concentration factor (VCF) and water recovery ...	43
3.3.5.	Calculation of saturation index.....	44
3.4.	Analyses.....	45
3.4.1.	Organic analysis	45
3.4.2.	Inorganic analysis.....	47
3.4.3.	Membrane characterisation	48
4.	Results and discussions.....	51
4.1.	Optimum operating parameters for MD.....	51
4.1.1.	Effect of feed flow	52

4.1.2.	Effect of feed temperature	53
4.1.3.	Effect of vacuum incorporation	54
4.1.4.	Summary of results	55
4.2.	Removal of fluoride and nitrate in MD	56
4.2.1.	Permeate flux	57
4.2.2.	Permeate quality and fluoride rejection	58
4.2.3.	Influence of nitrate	58
4.2.4.	Membrane morphology and element characteristics (SEM-EDX)	59
4.2.5.	Fluorite precipitation	60
4.2.6.	Contact angle measurement.....	63
4.2.7.	Organic analysis	64
4.2.8.	Restoring hydrophobicity of used MD membrane	65
4.2.9.	Conclusions	66
4.3.	Impact of vacuum application	67
4.3.1.	Flux pattern and fluoride rejection by VEDCMD.....	67
4.3.2.	Continuous VEDCMD operation with groundwater solution	68
4.3.3.	Conclusions	70
4.4.	Removal of pesticides in MD	70
4.4.1.	Preparatory pesticide removal experiments	71
4.4.2.	System pre-conditioning	72
4.4.3.	Permeate flux	74
4.4.4.	Contact angle measurement.....	75
4.4.5.	Permeate quality and pesticide rejection	76
4.4.6.	Permeate quality and pesticide rejection at 40°C and 70°C	81
4.4.7.	Rapid small scale column test	82
4.4.8.	Conclusions	84
5.	Conclusions and recommendations	86
5.1.	Conclusions.....	86
5.1.1.	Fluoride removal.....	86

5.1.2. Pesticide removal	86
5.1.3. Application of a GAC post treatment.....	86
5.1.4. Application of vacuum for performance enhancement	86
5.2. Recommendations.....	87
Appendix	88
A1 Speciation and log D of selected ionic micropollutants.....	88
A2 Mass distribution pesticide experiments at different temperatures discussed in Chapter 4.4.6.....	89
A3 Chemviron Carbon Activated Carbon Datasheet	90
References	93

List of abbreviations

AGMD	Air gap membrane distillation
BB	Building blocks
BP	Biopolymers
BV	Bed volumes
CCD	Charge coupled device
CDI	Capacitive deionisation
CF	Concentration factor
CP	Concentration polarisation
DCMD	Direct contact membrane distillation
DOC	Dissolved organic carbon
DOM	Dissolved organic matter
EBCT	Empty bed contact time
ED	Electrodialysis
EDC	Endocrine disrupting chemicals
EDR	Reverse electrodialysis
EDX	Energy-dispersive x-ray spectroscopy
FE-SEM	Field emission scanning electron microscope
FO	Forward osmosis
GAC	Granulated activated carbon
GC-MS	Gas chromatography-mass spectrometry
HA	Humid acid
HPLC	High pressure liquid chromatography
IAP	Ion activity product
IC	Ion chromatography
LC-OCD	Liquid chromatography-organic carbon detection
MD	Membrane distillation
MED	Multiple-effect distillation
MEMD	Multi-effect membrane distillation
MGMD	Material gap membrane distillation
MP-AES	Microwave plasma-atomic emission spectrometry
MSF	Multi-stage flash
NF	Nanofiltration
NMI	National measurement institute
PAC	Powdered activated carbon

PEDCMD	Pressure enhanced direct contact membrane distillation
POE	Point-of-entry
POU	Point-of-use
PTFE	Polytetrafluorethylene
PVDF	Polyvinylidene fluoride
RO	Reverse osmosis
RR	Recovery ratio
RSSCT	Rapid small scale column test
SEM	Scanning electron microscope
SGMD	Sweep gas membrane distillation
SI	Saturation index
SIM	Selective ion mode
SPE	Solid phase extraction
SSS	Small-scale system
TDS	Total dissolved solids
TOC	Total organic carbon
TP	Temperature polarisation
TROCs	Trace organic compounds
TZW	Technologie Zentrum Wasser
UF	Ultrafiltration
VCF	Volume concentration factor
VE-DCMD	Vacuum enhanced direct contact membrane distillation
VMD	Vacuum membrane distillation
V-MEMD	Vacuum multi effect membrane distillation
WTP	Water treatment plant

List of symbols

A	Area
B_m	Membrane coefficient
C_{inf}	Concentration of the compound in the influent to the column
C_{f0}	Concentration in the feed solution at the beginning of the experiment
C_{fe}	Concentration in the feed solution at the end of the experiment
C_{eff}	Concentration in the effluent to the column
C_p	Concentration in the permeate at the end of the experiment
$\Delta H_{v,i}$	Latent heat of vaporization
ΔP	Delta P, partial pressure difference
Δt	Delta t, temperature difference
E^0	Oxidizing character
H	Global Heat Transfer Coefficient
$h_{w,f}$	Heat Transfer Coefficient in the Feed Boundary Layers
$h_{w,p}$	Heat Transfer Coefficient in the Permeate Boundary Layers
J	Flux [$L/(m^2 \cdot h)$]
k_m	Thermal Conductivity of the Membrane
K_{OC}	Carbon-water partitioning coefficient
K_{SP}	Ion activity product
L_c	Concentrate Feed Volume
$L_{f,0}$	Initial Feed Volume
LogD	Distribution coefficient
LogP	Partition coefficient (octanol water partition coefficient)
m_f	Flow rate [L/min]
Nu	Nusselt number
Pr	Prandtl number
R_{ads}	Adsorptive removal
T_f	Feed temperature
T_{fb}	Fluid bulk temperature on the feed side
$T_{filtered}$	Filtration time
T_{fm}	Membrane surface temperature on the feed side
T_{pb}	Fluid bulk temperature on the permeate side
T_{pm}	Membrane surface temperature on the permeate side
T_p	Permeate temperature
v	velocity
v_{f0}	Volume of the feed at the beginning of the experiment
v_{fe}	Volume of the feed at the end of the experiment
v_p	Volume of the permeate at the end of the experiment

List of illustrations

Figure 2.1 Illustration of the MD process displaying heat and mass transfer (Naidu 2014).....	20
Figure 2.2 Membrane distillation configurations (Naidu 2014).....	21
Figure 3.1 DCMD bench scale setup	36
Figure 3.2 Schematic setup of bench scale VE-DCMD/DCMD.....	37
Figure 3.3 Schematic setup of the pilot DCMD	37
Figure 3.4 Pilot DCMD unit	38
Figure 3.5 Membrane test cell viewed from the permeate side	38
Figure 3.6 Small scale column with activated carbon and glass beads	40
Figure 3.7 Feed tanks (20L each).....	40
Figure 3.8 Setup of rapid small-scale column test.....	41
Figure 4.1 Flux and RR at different flow rates ($T_f = 55^\circ\text{C}$, $T_p = 25^\circ\text{C}$).....	53
Figure 4.2 Flux at different feed temperatures, ($T_p = 25 \pm 0.5^\circ\text{C}$, m_f 0.8 L/min, cross flow velocity = 0.04 m/s)	54
Figure 4.3 Average flux at different system pressures, ($T_f = 55 \pm 0.5^\circ\text{C}$, $T_p = 25 \pm 0.5^\circ\text{C}$, m_f 0.8 L/min, cross flow velocity = 0.04 m/s)	55
Figure 4.2.1 Membrane SEM images and EDX inorganic element spectra of used MD membranes with (a) Solution A (CaF_2) and (b) Solution B (groundwater).....	60
Figure 4.2.2 Model simulation of SI variation of CaF_2 as a function of CF with Solutions A and B (Solution A: - - - and Solution B: —) at different solution temperatures and constant pH 7.	62
Figure 4.2.3 Model simulation of SI variation of CaF_2 as a function of CF with Solution B at different solution pH values and constant temperature of 55°C	62
Figure 4.2.4 Model simulation of SI variation of CaF_2 and CaSO_4 as a function of CF with Solution B at different solution pH values and constant temperature of 55°C	63
Figure 4.2.5 LC-OCD chromatograms of initial and final feed and permeate in treating Solution C with DCMD (<i>BP=biopolymer, HS=humic substance, BB= building blocks, LMW=low molecular weight organics</i>).....	65
Figure 4.2.6 Permeate flux pattern with continuous VEDCMD operation for 3 runs with intermediate membrane cleaning with water at the end of each run (Solution B, $T_f = 55 \pm 0.5^\circ\text{C}$, and $T_p = 25 \pm 0.5^\circ\text{C}$, permeate vacuum = 300 mbar).....	69
Figure 4.2.7 SEM image of the used VEDCMD membrane upon cleaning with Milli Q water.....	69
Figure 4.2.8 Rejection rates and LogD of investigated pesticide	72
Figure 4.2.9 Mass distribution and logD of investigated pesticides	72

Figure 4.2.10 System pre-conditioning with 200 µg/L of each pesticide in Milli Q water.	73
Figure 4.2.11 Adsorption of tested substances in the MD and membrane system in comparison to LogD after 48h of circulation	73
Figure 4.2.12 Permeate Flux of solution A to D, at 55 ± 0.5 °C feed temperature and 25 ± 0.5 °C permeate temperature.....	75
Figure 4.2.13 Fouled membrane with solution D containing 5 mg/L humic acid, 200 µg/L of each pesticide and the synthetic groundwater model solution.	75
Figure 4.2.14 Rejection rates for solution A to D (error bars represent the standard deviation).....	77
Figure 4.2.15 Rejection rates for each compound (error bars represent the standard deviation).....	78
Figure 4.2.16 Mass distribution of pesticides in solution A	79
Figure 4.2.17 Mass distribution of pesticides in solution B	80
Figure 4.2.18 Mass distribution of pesticides in solution C	80
Figure 4.2.19 Mass distribution of pesticides in solution D	81
Figure 4.2.20 Removal of selected pesticides in RSSCT (F400, Chemviron Carbon, EBCT = 10 min equivalent in full scale).....	83

Abstract

The world's increasing population, economic development and climate change are driving the demand for more drinking water. In India, more than 100 million people live in areas of poor water quality. It has been reported that more than 33% of India's groundwater resources are unsuitable for consumption. Anthropogenic contaminants, such as microbial contaminants, nitrate, pesticides and industrial discharge, together with geogenic contaminants, such as fluoride, arsenic, iron and saline water, pose a threat to human health. In many rural areas neither a centralized system for drinking water production nor stable electric power supply exists. Decentralized small-scale water treatment systems with independent power supply could be implemented to produce safe drinking water for the communities. Recently, Membrane Distillation (MD) has been identified as a promising technology for drinking water production in situations with off-grid power supply. The objective of this research was to evaluate the application of MD for the production of drinking water in small-scale communities.

It was shown in this study that bulk salinity, as well as fluoride, nitrate and non-volatile pesticides were well removed from a synthetic brackish groundwater solution using a bench scale and a pilot scale MD unit. The application of a vacuum at the permeate side enhanced the permeate production up to 40%. An elevated scaling potential was identified in the presence of fluoride together with calcium. However, only minor traces of loosely deposited solids were observed in this study. The membrane was efficiently cleaned with flushing of Milli Q water.

Fluoride and nitrate were removed at rejection rates higher than 98-99% and 99% respectively in all experiments. The removal of pesticides was shown to be strongly depending on the vapour pressure and the LogD of the target compounds. A low vapour pressure and a low LogD were found to be favourable for a good rejection in MD.

Post-treatment with granulated activated carbon filtration after the MD was tested for removal of any remaining traces of pesticides to safeguard full compliance with drinking water standards. A 2 log unit removal for all selected pesticides was achieved up to 67,600 bed volumes.

The study demonstrates that membrane distillation is a promising alternative for small-scale water supply from brackish groundwater.