

Concentration naturelle de germanium dans les noyaux et les lysosomes des cellules branchiales de l'huître *Crassostrea gigas*



A systematic search for germanium was undertaken on oyster gills. Molluscs were collected at different times of the year in seven different areas in the Channel and the Atlantic Ocean. Some of these areas are protected; others may be polluted by industrial wastes. Oyster cells never present any signs of damage at the ultrastructural level. Lysosomes have heterogeneous densities and frequently contain germanium, detected by electron probe microanalysis. Nuclei, which are classical in aspect, may contain germanium, especially in the dense chromatin and nucleolus. Irrespective of period and locality, the amounts of the detected element are of the same order. It seems unlikely that germanium originates from pollution of the marine environment or contamination of the samples. The physiological role of germanium is at present unknown. The bioaccumulation observed could nevertheless be the result of a normal physiological process involving nucleic metals.

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