



## Point of view regarding the study of microplastics in *Echinolittorina* sp.

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Microplastics represent an emerging issue, being embedded in many environments, reaching foods and feeds, and ultimately affecting human health, through the food chain, but also in other ways. Thus, many studies focus on this subject of interest.

Our journal, AACL Bioflux, published the paper "Bioaccumulation of microplastics in *Echinolittorina* sp. along intertidal areas of Barangay Buru-un, Iligan City, Philippines", authored by Laput et al (2024) respecting all the ethical standards for processing and publishing a scientific paper.

However, some points of concern were brought to our attention by Abreo & Capangpangan (2024) about the published paper. After careful consideration, for transparency and accuracy, but also to bring additional important information regarding the study of Laput et al (2024), we have decided to publish the commentary of Abreo & Capangpangan (2024), respecting the right to their opinion. Among the concerns, the authors mention that the study of Laput et al (2024) did not prove the bioaccumulation of microplastics in *Echinolittorina* sp., with some comments on the research design, mainly that a negative control should have been used and that environmental microplastics presence was not determined, among others.

After another analysis of the aforementioned published paper and of the commentary, we have the following considerations:

1. Abreo & Capangpangan (2024) correctly observe that bioaccumulation was not proven in the study of Laput et al (2024). In our opinion, the study does not prove the bioaccumulation, but does prove the presence (as Abreo & Capangpangan also correctly note) of microplastics in the organisms, aspect also mentioned in the main body of the text. Indeed, the incorrect use of the term "bioaccumulation" evaded the authors, the reviewers and the editorial team. This is a rare occurrence, and our team is continuously working on improving its editing and reviewing processes.

2. A negative control was not used. It is our opinion that, in some specific situations, a control, although recommended, is not mandatory. In the case of microplastics, blank controls, as said, although recommended, are often contaminated (Munno et al 2023). Thus, we have decided that a blank control was not mandatory in this case, even though it would have brought additional information to the study.

3. Environmental microplastics presence was not specifically determined. Indeed, a microplastics analysis of the water or sediment would have brought some important supplementary information about the area. However, large plastic items were identified in the study site, and presented in the paper (food packaging, plastic items such as toys, etc.). It is correct to presume that microplastics also exist in the environment, as plastic items pollute the area.

In conclusion, we respect the work of Laput et al (2024), and we thank Abreo & Capangpangan (2024) for bringing to attention some valid concerns about the paper. The study of Laput et al (2024) did not prove bioaccumulation, but the presence of microplastics in *Echinolittorina* sp. along intertidal areas of Barangay Buru-un, Iligan City, Philippines. We advise to consider the commentary of Abreo & Capangpangan (2024) when citing Laput et al (2024).

**Conflict of Interest.** The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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