

# Deep trouble: fish toxicology under pressure

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Although far from pollution sources, the deep sea is no longer immaculate and animals having managed to the very harsh conditions prevailing down there, now have to face this new challenge. All studies reveal that deep-sea fishes accumulate xenobiotics such as PCBs and DDTs to very high levels in their tissues, particularly the liver. However, the impact of these pollutants is hard to determine due to the fact that deep-sea fish rarely survive travelling into fishing nets towards the surface. This led us to develop an *in vitro* system based on living liver slices on which we could investigate the impact of pollutants. This work reveals that liver cells from moribund deep-sea fish can be kept functional for hours allowing the first ever physiological experiments on deep-sea fish cells. Surprisingly, results suggest that hydrostatic pressure inhibits their ability to detoxify pollutants, possibly leading to their high levels in tissues.