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Effects of ocean warming and acidification on accumulation and cellular responsiveness to cadmium in mussels *Mytilus galloprovincialis*: Importance of the seasonal status

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*Original*

Effects of ocean warming and acidification on accumulation and cellular responsiveness to cadmium in mussels *Mytilus galloprovincialis*: Importance of the seasonal status / Nardi, A.; Benedetti, M.; D'Errico, G.; Fattorini, D.; Regoli, F.. - In: AQUATIC TOXICOLOGY. - ISSN 0166-445X. - STAMPA. - 204:(2018), pp. 171-179. [10.1016/j.aquatox.2018.09.009]

*Availability:*

This version is available at: 11566/264923 since: 2022-06-01T13:01:40Z

*Publisher:*

*Published*

DOI:10.1016/j.aquatox.2018.09.009

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note finali coverage

(Article begins on next page)

1 **Effects of ocean warming and acidification on accumulation and cellular responsiveness to**  
2 **cadmium in mussels *Mytilus galloprovincialis*: importance of the seasonal status.**

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22  
23 **Keywords:** *Mytilus galloprovincialis*; ocean acidification; global warming; metal contamination;  
24 bioaccumulation; cellular biomarkers

25

26 **Abstract**

27 Ocean warming and acidification could represent additional threat to marine organisms already  
28 coping with other anthropogenic impacts, such as chemical contamination in coastal areas. In this  
29 study, interactions between such multiple stressors and their synergistic effects in terms of  
30 accumulation, detoxification and biological effects of metals were investigated in the Mediterranean  
31 mussel *Mytilus galloprovincialis*. Organisms sampled during the winter period were exposed for 28  
32 days to different combinations of two temperatures (10°C and 15°C), two pH/pCO<sub>2</sub> (8.20/~400μatm  
33 and 7.4/~3000μatm) and two doses of cadmium (0 and 20 μg/L). Cadmium concentrations increased  
34 in digestive glands and gills of metal-exposed mussels, and were further enhanced by co-exposure at  
35 higher temperature. Interactive effects of temperature and/or pH were observed on Cd-mediated  
36 metallothioneins induction, responsiveness of antioxidant system and onset of oxidative damages to  
37 lipids, with tissue-specific effects. Immunological effects showed a generalized sensitivity of  
38 lysosomal membrane stability toward the investigated stressors with major effects in co-exposed  
39 organisms. Cadmium and temperature affected phagocytosis efficiency and haemocytes population  
40 composition probably influencing the micronuclei frequency through varied mitotic rate. Several  
41 differences were highlighted between these results and those previously obtained from mussels  
42 exposed in summer, supporting the importance of season when addressing the tolerance of temperate  
43 organisms to variations of environmental factors. The elaboration of the whole biomarkers results  
44 through weighted criteria allowed to summarize specific hazard indices, highlighting tissue-specific  
45 sensitivity toward multiple stressors and the need of improving the knowledge on multiple stressors  
46 interaction.

## 47 **1.Introduction**

48 Ocean warming and acidification are posing serious threats to marine ecosystems. Since the pre-  
49 industrial values, ocean pH has dropped by 0.1 units (Gattuso and Lavigne, 2009) and global mean  
50 temperature has risen by almost 1°C (Hansen *et al.*, 2016). According to projections of future  
51 scenarios, pH will further decrease down to 7.8 and temperature will rise of 2°C by 2100 (IPCC,  
52 2013).

53 These changes can induce direct effects on health status and physiological performance of marine  
54 organisms, but synergistic effects between multiple stressors may also occur with less documented  
55 consequences (Crain *et al.*, 2008; Burton and Johnston, 2010; Kroeker *et al.*, 2013). Metal  
56 contamination is a typical anthropogenic footprint in coastal areas (Doney, 2010; Bijima *et al.*, 2013;  
57 Gilaranz *et al.*, 2016) and both ocean warming and acidification, through different mechanisms, can  
58 individually influence distribution and fate of trace elements in sediments and seawater, as well as  
59 their bioaccumulation in marine organisms. Temperature may increase bioaccumulation of metals  
60 enhancing their solubility (Sokolova and Lannig, 2008), and the ventilation and feeding activity of  
61 marine organisms due to higher energy demand (Viarengo *et al.*, 1988; Nichols and Playle, 2004;  
62 Baines *et al.*, 2006; Cherkasov *et al.*, 2007; Mubiana and Blust, 2007; Guinot *et al.*, 2012; Negri *et*  
63 *al.*, 2013; Coppola *et al.*, 2018). On the other side, also CO<sub>2</sub>-enrichment in seawater can alter the  
64 speciation and solubility of metals forming strong complexes with carbonate ions (Millero *et al.*,  
65 2009; Hoffmann *et al.*, 2012; Stockdale *et al.*, 2016) or with organic compounds (Gledhill *et al.*,  
66 2015). Increased fluxes of metals from sediments to seawater have been shown to occur at reduced  
67 pH values or simulating CO<sub>2</sub> leakages from sub-seabed (Riba *et al.* 2003; Ardelan *et al.*, 2009; de  
68 Orte *et al.*, 2014a, 2014b; Basallote *et al.*, 2015), and a higher uptake due to acidification has been  
69 described in several marine invertebrates including bivalves (López *et al.*, 2010; Ivanina *et al.*, 2014;  
70 Götze *et al.*, 2014; Rodríguez-Romero *et al.*, 2014a; Shi *et al.*, 2016; Velez *et al.*, 2016), polychaetes  
71 (Rodríguez-Romero *et al.*, 2014b), and cephalopods (Lacoue-Labarthe *et al.*, 2009, 2011).

72 Various cellular mechanisms have been suggested to influence the vulnerability of marine  
73 organisms to metals toxicity when also exposed to variations of temperature and pH/pCO<sub>2</sub>. The  
74 interaction between temperature and metals has been demonstrated to cause impairment of  
75 mitochondrial function, pro-oxidative mechanisms, accumulation of lipid peroxidation products and  
76 damages to lysosomes and DNA (Sokolova, 2004; Kefaloyianni *et al.*, 2005; Cherkasov *et al.*, 2007;  
77 Mubiana and Blust, 2007; Sokolova and Lannig, 2008; Guinot *et al.*, 2012; Negri *et al.*, 2013; Attig  
78 *et al.*, 2014; Banni *et al.*, 2014; Gomiero and Viarengo, 2014; Izagirre *et al.*, 2014; Múgica *et al.*,  
79 2015). Similarly, interactive effects between metals and acidification are addressed in impaired larval  
80 development, onset of DNA damage, pro-oxidative mechanisms and lower antioxidant efficiency,  
81 alterations of the immune function (Lewis *et al.*, 2013, 2016; Roberts *et al.*, 2013; Campbell *et al.*,  
82 2014; Ivanina *et al.*, 2015, 2016; Siddiqui and Bielmyer-Fraser, 2015).

83 Recently, cadmium (Cd) accumulation was shown to be unaffected by variations of temperature  
84 and pH in the digestive gland and gills of the Mediterranean mussel *M. galloprovincialis* and of the  
85 Antarctic scallop *A. colbecki*. At the same time, however, the effects of Cd on metal-binding proteins,  
86 immune system, antioxidant responses and oxidative stress biomarkers were strongly modulated by  
87 these co-factors, with different effects and magnitude depending on species and tissue (Benedetti *et*  
88 *al.*, 2016; Nardi *et al.*, 2017). Beside species- and tissue-mediated specificity, seasonality of  
89 environmental factors (notably temperature) and biological processes (i.e. reproductive cycle) could  
90 be responsible for the different capability of organisms to tolerate variations of temperature and pH  
91 related to climate change and their interactions with pollutants. In this respect, several cellular  
92 responses typically involved in defence mechanisms and resistance to stressors exhibit marked  
93 seasonal fluctuations in marine invertebrates and the ecophysiological performance of organisms is  
94 also influenced by their seasonal metabolic status and energy available for processes like reproduction  
95 and growth (Ringwood *et al.*, 2002; Bocchetti and Regoli, 2006; Farcy *et al.*, 2007; Bocchetti *et al.*,  
96 2008; Pereira *et al.*, 2012).

97           Considering the complexity of interactions between environmental and biological factors, this  
98 study aimed to elucidate whether seasonality can influence the responsiveness of *M. galloprovincialis*  
99 to various combinations of temperature, pH and Cd: experiments were performed in winter and results  
100 compared with those obtained in a similar study carried out in summer season (Nardi *et al.*, 2017).  
101 Beside Cd accumulation, a wide battery of biomarkers was chosen to reflect the network of cellular  
102 mechanisms underlying metal detoxification, oxyradical metabolism and onset of different forms of  
103 cellular toxicity (Regoli and Giuliani, 2014): these biomarkers included induction of  
104 metallothioneins, variations of single antioxidant defenses, total oxyradical scavenging capacity,  
105 accumulation of lipid peroxidation products in digestive gland and gills, while lysosomal membrane  
106 stability, phagocytosis, granulocytes/hyalinocytes ratio, DNA strand breaks and micronuclei  
107 frequency were measured in haemocytes. To better summarize the biological significance of obtained  
108 results and to facilitate the seasonal comparison of mussels susceptibility, the overall biomarkers  
109 results have been elaborated through a widely validated quantitative hazard model (SediquaSoft):  
110 this model applies weighted criteria based on the toxicological relevance of each analyzed biomarker  
111 and on the magnitude of observed variations to summarize a synthetic cellular hazard index (Piva *et*  
112 *al.*, 2011; Benedetti *et al.*, 2012).

113           The obtained results are intended to expand our knowledge on the impacts of synergistic effects  
114 of multiple stressors on cellular and tissue health status, and to relate them with the physiology of  
115 mussels as a response to seasonal change.

116

## 117 **2.Materials and Methods**

### 118 *2.1 Animal collection and experimental design*

119 Mussels, *M. galloprovincialis* ( $6.0 \pm 0.5$  cm shell length), were obtained in January 2015 from  
120 a shellfish farm in an unpolluted area of Central Adriatic Sea (Regoli *et al.*, 2014) and maintained for  
121 7 days in aquaria with aerated artificial seawater (ASW; Instant Ocean®) at local environmental  
122 conditions of salinity (37 practical salinity units), temperature (10°C) and pH (8.20).

123 After acclimation, mussels were randomly assigned and exposed to one of the following  
124 treatments, each containing 36 organisms in 20 L tanks: 1) control condition (CTRL), at  
125 environmental temperature of 10°C, normocapnia with pH=8.20/  $p\text{CO}_2 \sim 400 \mu\text{atm}$ ; 2) Cd exposure  
126 (Cd), 10°C, pH=8.20/  $p\text{CO}_2 \sim 400 \mu\text{atm}$  and 20  $\mu\text{g/L}$  Cd; 3) acidification (A), 10°C, hypercapnia  
127 with pH=7.40/  $p\text{CO}_2 \sim 3000 \mu\text{atm}$ ; 4) warming (W), 15°C and pH=8.20/  $p\text{CO}_2 \sim 400 \mu\text{atm}$ ; 5)  
128 acidification + Cd (A-Cd), 10°C, pH=7.40/  $p\text{CO}_2 \sim 3000 \mu\text{atm}$  and 20  $\mu\text{g/L}$  Cd ; 6) warming + Cd  
129 (W-Cd), 15°C, pH=8.20/  $p\text{CO}_2 \sim 400 \mu\text{atm}$  and 20  $\mu\text{g/L}$  Cd ; 7) acidification + warming (A-W), 15°C  
130 and pH=7.40/  $p\text{CO}_2 \sim 3000 \mu\text{atm}$ ; 8) acidification + warming + Cd (A-W-Cd), 15°C, pH=7.40/  
131  $p\text{CO}_2 \sim 3000 \mu\text{atm}$  and 20  $\mu\text{g/L}$  Cd. Despite the effects related to climate changes are expected to  
132 occur over the course of decades, organisms were exposed to the tested environmental conditions of  
133 Cd, pH and temperature without gradual acclimation, thus simulating sudden changes as those more  
134 easily occurring in coastal or estuarine areas. The same experimental design had been previously  
135 applied on mussels sampled during the summer with the exception of temperature values, respectively  
136 at 20 and 25 °C for the control and warming treatments (Nardi *et al.*, 2017). Cd dose is representative  
137 for a polluted but environmentally realistic condition in coastal waters, typically ranging from less  
138 than 1 up to hundreds  $\mu\text{g/L}$  in highly polluted areas (Neff, 2002; Bakary *et al.*, 2015). Lowered pH  
139 was adapted from scenario RCP 8.5 and IPCC WGII AR5 (IPCC, 2014; Wong *et al.*, 2014) reporting  
140 a mean pH value of 7.7 for open oceans, but predicting more pronounced reductions in coastal areas.  
141 The experimental pH was reached by adding to each treatment ASW (pH=8.2) small and defined  
142 amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>-saturated ASW, obtained by bubbling pure CO<sub>2</sub> in ASW for at least 24h, until

143 reaching the target pH within a couple of hours (Nardi *et al.*, 2017). Salinity and pH were measured  
144 daily, while total alkalinity ( $A_T$ ) was measured twice per week according to Dickson *et al.* (2007),  
145 and used for calculating seawater carbonate parameters ( $pCO_2$ , and saturation state ( $\Omega$ ) for calcite  
146 and aragonite) in CO2SYS (Pierrott *et al.*, 2006) using barometric pressure values (full seawater  
147 chemistry is provided in Table 1). For calculations, we used NBS scale for seawater pH, carbonate  
148 constants from Millero (2010),  $KSO_4^-$  constant from Dickson *et al.* (2007), and concentrations of  
149 silicate and phosphate from Instant Ocean® seawater (0.21  $\mu\text{mol/kg}$  and 0.05  $\mu\text{mol/kg}$ , respectively).  
150 Water in each treatment was changed every other day using water at the same pH and temperature to  
151 avoid fluctuations of these parameters during the exposure period. Mussels fed 12 hours prior the  
152 water change with a commercial mixture of zooplankton for filter-feeding organisms (Zooplanktos-  
153 S 50-300  $\mu\text{m}$ , Brightwell Aquatics, Elysburg, PA).

154 After four weeks, animals were sampled for chemical and biological analyses. Specifically gills  
155 and digestive glands were excised from the 36 specimens for each treatment, pooled in 12 samples,  
156 each constituted by the tissues of 3 individuals, rapidly frozen in liquid nitrogen and maintained at -  
157 80°C: these 12 pooled samples were shared for analyses of Cd and biomarker responses, to guarantee  
158 a n value = 5 for replicates analysed for each parameter in each treatment. Haemolymph was also  
159 withdrawn from the adductor muscle of 5 specimens for each treatment and immediately used for  
160 measurement of immunity parameters and genotoxic damage.

## 161 2.2 Cd determination

162 Concentration of Cd in digestive gland and gills of mussels was analyzed according to  
163 previously described methods (Regoli *et al.*, 2005). For each treatment, tissues were dried at 60°C  
164 overnight and digested in a microwave system (Mars V, CEM). After digestion samples were  
165 analyzed by atomic absorption spectrophotometry with graphite furnace atomization and Zeeman  
166 effect. Quality assurance and control were assessed by processing blank samples and reference  
167 standard material (Mussel Tissue Standard Reference Material SRM NIST-2977, National Institute  
168 of Standards and Technology Gaithersburg, MD, USA), which always resulted within the 95%



169 confidence interval of certified values. Data are expressed as  $\mu\text{g/g}$  dry weight (mean value  $\pm$  standard  
170 deviation,  $n = 5$ ), limits of quantification and detection were respectively 0.002 and 0.001  $\mu\text{g/g}$ .

### 171 2.3 Biomarkers responses

172 Standardized methods, described in detail in Supplementary Material 1 (SM1), were used for  
173 biomarkers analyses. Digestive gland and gills were analyzed for metallothioneins (MTs), antioxidant  
174 enzymes and scavenger (catalase, glutathione S-transferases, glutathione peroxidases, glutathione  
175 reductase, total glutathione), total oxyradical scavenging capacity toward peroxy radicals (TOSC  
176  $\text{ROO}\bullet$ ) and hydroxyl radicals (TOSC  $\text{HO}\bullet$ ), malondialdehyde content (MDA). Lipofuscin and neutral  
177 lipids were histochemically determined on 8  $\mu\text{m}$  thick cryostat sections of digestive glands.  
178 Haemocytes were immediately processed for immune-related alterations, such as lysosomal  
179 membrane stability (neutral red retention time, NRRT), phagocytosis activity and granulocytes versus  
180 hyalinocytes ratio. Also genotoxic effects were evaluated in haemocytes in terms of percentage of  
181 DNA integrity (Comet assay) and micronuclei frequency (MN).

### 182 2.7 Statistical analyses

183 Cd accumulation and biological responses results were submitted to analysis of variance  
184 (One-way ANOVA), after checking the normal distribution (Shapiro-Wilk test) and homogeneity of  
185 variances (Levene's Test). The null hypothesis tested was that no significant difference existed  
186 between different treatments, level of significance was set to  $p < 0.05$ , and *post-hoc* tests (Student-  
187 Newman-Keuls, SNK), were used to compare group of means. All statistical analyses were  
188 performed using RStudio (version 0.99.491).

189 The overall significance of biomarkers results was summarized in a cellular hazard index  
190 elaborated through a previously developed quantitative model which applies weighted criteria to  
191 discriminate different endpoints and the magnitude of effects (SediquaSoft, Piva *et al.*, 2011). Despite  
192 whole calculations and assumptions have been fully given elsewhere (Piva *et al.*, 2011; Benedetti *et*  
193 *al.*, 2012), the general rationale of the model is to assign a weight to various biomarkers depending  
194 on their toxicological relevance and to compare variations of responses toward a threshold specific

195 for each biomarker, which considers the different responsiveness among various species and tissues,  
196 and the possibility of biphasic responses. The calculated Hazard Quotient (HQ) does not include the  
197 contribution of biomarkers with variations lower or equal to their threshold, and it averages or adds  
198 the effects respectively for those biomarkers with variations up to 2-fold or more than 2-fold greater  
199 than the specific threshold (Piva *et al.*, 2011; Benedetti *et al.*, 2012, 2014; Regoli *et al.*, 2014; Avio  
200 *et al.*, 2015). The model finally assigns the elaborated HQ to one of five classes of hazard, from  
201 Absent to Severe (Piva *et al.*, 2011).

202

### 203 **3. Results**

204 A significant increase of Cd concentrations was observed in digestive gland and gills of mussels  
205 exposed to this metal (Fig.1a, b), and further enhanced in both the tissues by co-exposure at higher  
206 temperature (Cd and A-Cd *versus* W-Cd and A-W-Cd) (Fig. 1a, b).

207 Metallothioneins in the digestive gland were not significantly induced in organisms exposed to  
208 Cd alone, while increasing in those co-exposed to the metal at reduced pH and/or higher temperature  
209 (A-Cd, W-Cd and A-W-Cd) (Fig. 1c). In gills, metallothioneins were significantly enhanced only in  
210 organisms exposed to Cd at higher temperature and control pH (W-Cd) (Fig.1d).

211 Antioxidant defenses showed tissue-specific effects of the investigated factors. In the digestive  
212 gland, no statistically significant variations were observed in various treatments for catalase, GSTs,  
213 Se-dependent GPx and TGSH (Fig. 2a, b, c, f). On the other hand, Cd caused a marked induction of  
214 total GPx, particularly evident at control pH (compare CTRL vs. Cd and W vs. W-Cd); at reduced  
215 pH, Cd did not further modulate the increase of total GPx caused by acidification itself (A vs. A-Cd,  
216 and A-W vs. A-W-Cd) (Fig. 2d). Higher temperature was the only treatment to significantly reduce  
217 GR activity in digestive gland (Fig. 2e). Total oxyradical scavenging capacity toward peroxy radical  
218 (TOSC ROO•), levels of malondialdehyde and lipofuscin were generally enhanced by treatments  
219 involving Cd alone and/or in combination with other stressors, but the statistical significance was  
220 obtained only for TOSC and lipofuscin in mussels co-exposed to Cd, acidification and higher

221 temperature (A-W-Cd) (Fig. 2g, i, j). Conversely, neutral lipids content was reduced in all Cd-  
222 exposed organisms at reduced pH and/or higher temperature (A-Cd, W-Cd and A-W-Cd) compared  
223 to organisms exposed to Cd alone (Fig. 2k).

224 In gills, significant variations of antioxidant enzymes were observed for glutathione S-  
225 transferases, selenium-dependent and total glutathione peroxidases. GSTs were inhibited in mussels  
226 exposed to Cd alone, Cd at higher temperature (W-Cd) and higher temperature at reduced pH (A-W)  
227 (Fig. 3b). Opposite effects were observed on Se-dependent GPx which were increased by Cd and  
228 temperature as individual stressors (Cd and W) and by the combination of these factors with  
229 acidification (A-Cd, A-W, A-W-Cd) (Fig. 3c). Enhanced values were also observed for total GPx  
230 activity, particularly for treatments involving higher temperature and/or acidification (Fig. 3d).  
231 Limited variations were measured in the total oxyradical scavenging capacity toward hydroxyl radical  
232 (TOSC HO•) with slightly higher values in organisms exposed to Cd or higher temperature (Fig. 3h).

233 Lysosomal membrane stability in haemocytes significantly decreased in all experimental  
234 treatments, with major effects in organisms co-exposed to all multiple stressors (A-W-Cd) (Fig. 4a).  
235 Phagocytosis rate (Fig. 4b) was reduced in mussels treated at higher temperature (alone or in  
236 combination with Cd), and also granulocytes/hyalinocytes ratio (Fig. 4c) was significantly reduced  
237 in organisms co-exposed to Cd at higher temperature (W-Cd and A-W-Cd). No significant variations  
238 were observed in terms of DNA strand breaks (Fig. 4d) while micronuclei frequency was generally  
239 enhanced in all organisms exposed to Cd alone or with higher temperature (Fig. 4e).

240 Biomarkers responses observed in each experimental condition were summarized in a single  
241 hazard index through the application of weighted criteria (Fig. 5). The elaborated class of hazard  
242 revealed that digestive gland was generally more sensitive to Cd dosed alone and in combination with  
243 A or W, when the assigned class of hazard was “Moderate”, compared to “Slight” in all the other  
244 treatments (Fig. 5). In gills, higher values of HQ were typically measured compared to digestive  
245 gland, and variations of biomarkers were generally reflected by a “Moderate” class of hazard (Fig.  
246 5).

247 **4. Discussion**

248 This study provided new evidence that climate change can affect accumulation and  
249 responsiveness to metals in marine organisms.

250 The obtained results highlighted an increased Cd accumulation in mussels co-exposed to the  
251 metal at higher temperature during the winter period, contrasting with our previous study in which  
252 this effect was not observed during the summer (Nardi *et al.*, 2017). The winter environmental  
253 temperature was 10°C and the increased value selected for this study (15°C) was still below the upper  
254 thermal limit of *M. galloprovincialis* (Anestis *et al.*, 2007; Gazeau *et al.*, 2014). On the other hand,  
255 the environmental and warmer values used for summer exposures were 20° and 25°C (Nardi *et al.*,  
256 2017). In this respect, only during the colder period the increase of temperature would have enhanced  
257 metabolism rate and consequent accumulation of metals, confirming that the effects of climate-related  
258 stressors are closely related to thermal tolerance of organisms (Ioannou *et al.*, 2009; Pörtner, 2010),  
259 as confirmed in mussels exposed to thermal stress (21°C). The effect of temperature on enhanced Cd  
260 accumulation was noticed both in digestive gland and gills, suggesting a whole organism,  
261 physiological response, rather than a tissue-specific pathway. The different seasonal effects of  
262 temperature on Cd accumulation suggests that future warming scenarios should take into account this  
263 variability in temperate marine organisms, as *M. galloprovincialis*, which experience wide natural  
264 fluctuations of this environmental parameter. The metal uptake was not further modulated by  
265 reduction of pH. Similar results were previously observed in mussels exposed during the summer and  
266 in scallops from Antarctic region (*A. colbecki*) (Benedetti *et al.*, 2016; Nardi *et al.*, 2017), while a  
267 slight influence of lowered pH on Cd accumulation occurred in the smooth Mediterranean scallop  
268 *Flexopecten glaber* (Nardi *et al.*, 2018). Overall these results confirm the more limited influence of  
269 acidification compared to temperature on the bioaccumulation of Cd, despite a certain influence of  
270 species-specific characteristics.

271 Metallothioneins induction is typically associated to the increase of tissue metal concentrations,  
272 but a similar parallelism was not always observed in our study. In both digestive gland and gills, MTs

273 were not induced in mussels exposed to Cd alone, suggesting that basal levels of these proteins were  
274 able to compensate for the increased metal content. The lack of correlations between Cd  
275 bioaccumulation and MTs induction observed during co-exposures supports the modulation on  
276 protein synthesis by oxidative pressure, confirming the role of prooxidant mechanisms caused by  
277 synergistic effects of multiple stressors, as also previously observed in mussels exposed during the  
278 summer (Viarengo, 2000; Regoli and Giuliani, 2014; Nardi *et al.*, 2017).

279 The oxidative challenge was assessed through the analysis of an extensive array of biomarkers  
280 which included antioxidant defenses, total oxyradical scavenging capacity and oxidative damages. In  
281 digestive gland, total GPx appeared as responsive enzymes, particularly toward Cd and acidification.  
282 However, the more relevant results in terms of varied susceptibility to oxidative stress were observed  
283 in mussels co-exposed to Cd, acidification and higher temperature. In these treatments, the significant  
284 increase of total oxyradical scavenging capacity toward peroxy radicals and of lipofuscin content,  
285 confirm the importance of oxidative pathways in modulating the responsiveness of marine organisms  
286 to multiple stressors, as also suggested for *Hediste diversicolor* co-exposed to Hg and pH reduction  
287 (Freitas *et al.*, 2017). Neutral lipids content tended to increase in digestive gland after exposure to Cd  
288 alone and to decrease during co-exposures to multiple stressors, suggesting a greater use of reserve  
289 materials under increasing cellular stress, as already hypothesized for *M. galloprovincialis* challenged  
290 by trace metals and organic pollutants (Regoli, 1992; Koukouzika and Dimitriadis, 2008). As for  
291 MTs, also variations of oxidative parameters in digestive gland did not correlate with Cd content, and  
292 thus confirmed the occurrence of synergistic cellular effects between multiple stressors. Compared  
293 to actual results, mussels previously exposed during the summer showed a greater sensitivity of  
294 antioxidants in digestive gland toward temperature rise (alone or in combination with Cd), further  
295 indicating that pathways of response and susceptibility to changes of environmental stressors can  
296 vary between seasons.

297 Different and more frequent oxidative variations were observed in gills. Cd, higher temperature  
298 and acidification (alone or in combination) were generally responsible for a certain reduction of GSTs

299 and the induction of Se-dependent and Se-independent GPx, confirming the involvement of these  
300 antioxidant pathways also reported for mussels exposed during the summer (Nardi *et al.*, 2017). The  
301 results obtained in gills at higher temperature, conversely to digestive gland, highlight that metabolic  
302 and physiological functions of tissues may be responsible for their different responsiveness and  
303 sensitivity toward the investigated stressors. The increase of winter temperature might exert oxidative  
304 challenge in the gills due to enhanced filtration rates, thus explaining the raise of antioxidant  
305 protection (Fields *et al.*, 2012). The higher enzymatic activities caused by individual stressors were  
306 not synergistically enhanced during co-exposures, and were not typically paralleled by considerable  
307 variations of the total oxyradical scavenging capacity; the concomitant lack of changes in  
308 malondialdehyde content indicates that reported variations of antioxidant system were efficient in  
309 preventing an oxidative impairment in gills: once again, winter results are partly in contrast with those  
310 obtained in summer experiments when the total oxyradical scavenging capacity was decreased toward  
311 hydroxyl radicals (Nardi *et al.*, 2017). The generally higher efficiency of antioxidant protection  
312 observed during the winter reinforce the evidence that responsiveness of mussels to climate changes  
313 is influenced by seasonal-specific features.

314 Lysosomal membranes are well known targets of oxyradical toxicity and their destabilization is  
315 a typical effect of chemical, environmental or biological factors. In our study, lysosomal impairment  
316 was a reliable biomarker toward the investigated stressors, further evidencing the occurrence of  
317 synergistic effects during co-exposures to multiple factors. At the same time, temperature, alone or  
318 in combination with Cd lowered phagocytosis rate, probably due to a reduction of granulocytes,  
319 which are the haemocytes responsible of this activity (Gorbi *et al.*, 2013). The generalized impairment  
320 of lysosomal membranes stability and phagocytosis rate confirm the sensitivity of haemocytes in  
321 marine invertebrates and their utility as early warning signal of environmental disturbance (Beesly *et*  
322 *al.*, 2008; Matozzo *et al.*, 2012; Sureda *et al.*, 2013; Nardi *et al.*, 2017). Sensitivity of haemocytes to  
323 Cd, both alone and in combination with temperature was supported also by the increase in micronuclei  
324 frequency which, considering the absence of changes in DNA strand breaks, might be modulated by

325 changes in mitotic frequency, rather than a direct genotoxic mechanism, as previously hypothesized  
326 in similar experiments (Nardi *et al.*, 2017; Benedetti *et al.*, 2016).

327 The biological significance of the observed biomarker responses was better summarized by the  
328 elaboration of specific hazard indices based on weighted criteria, which consider both the magnitude  
329 of variations and the relative toxicological importance of investigated parameters (Piva *et al.*, 2011;  
330 Benedetti *et al.*, 2012). Biomarkers have been widely used for early warning detection of  
331 environmental disturbance, and various integrative methods and health indices have been recently  
332 developed to improve their use in ecological risk assessment (Beliaeff and Burgeot, 2002; Piva *et al.*,  
333 2011; Broeg *et al.*, 2005; Dagnino *et al.*, 2008; Benedetti *et al.*, 2012; Marigómez *et al.*, 2013). The  
334 elaboration applied in the present study is part of a more articulated Weight Of Evidence model  
335 (SediquaSoft) which integrates multiple typologies of data including sediment and seawater  
336 chemistry, bioaccumulation, biomarker, ecotoxicological bioassays and benthic communities:  
337 integrative rules and assumptions have been detailed in previous papers and already validated in  
338 several risk assessment studies (Benedetti *et al.*, 2012, 2014; Regoli *et al.*, 2014; Avio *et al.*, 2015;  
339 Bebianno *et al.*, 2015). The hazard indices derived from biomarker results highlighted that, toward  
340 individual stressors, digestive gland is more sensitive to variations of Cd (HQ Moderate) compared  
341 to acidification or warming alone (HQ Slight): despite different combinations of multiple stressors  
342 were shown to highlight synergistic effects on various biological responses and mechanisms of action,  
343 they did not determine an overall increase of the assigned class of cellular.

344 Gills typically exhibited a Moderate hazard index suggesting that the more direct contact with  
345 seawater, and the lower basal metabolic activity could render these tissues more susceptible to  
346 fluctuations of environmental factors. Once again, the variations observed for various biomarker  
347 responses after contemporary exposure to multiple stressors did not change the elaborated class of  
348 cellular hazard indices compared to individual factors:

349 Overall, the sensitivity of winter mussels is partly in contrast with results obtained in summer  
350 season, when organisms exhibited more clear synergistic effects of Cd dosed in association to

351 warming and/or acidification, highlighting the importance of seasonal-specific sensitivity of  
352 temperate organisms toward multiple stressors. Our data suggest also the need to still investigate  
353 tissue-specific sensitivity, mechanisms of action related to physiological functions, and seasonal-  
354 dependent effects to better understand tolerance to climate changes and consequences of multiple  
355 stressors in marine organisms. Finally, the application of weighted criteria to elaborate hazard indices  
356 was confirmed as a fundamental procedure to summarize the biological significance of large datasets  
357 of complex biomarker data, thus facilitating prediction and comparisons between the effects of  
358 individual and multiple stressors.



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620 **Table 1** - Summary of water chemistry parameters during experimental exposure. S (salinity), T (temperature),  
 621 pH<sub>NBS</sub> (pH calibrated with National Bureau of Standard scale), AT (total alkalinity), pCO<sub>2</sub> (partial pressure of  
 622 CO<sub>2</sub>),  $\Omega_c$  and  $\Omega_a$  (saturation state of respectively calcite and aragonite). Data are presented as means  $\pm$  standard  
 623 deviations.

Treatment	measured parameters				calculated parameters		
	S	T (°C)	pH <sub>NBS</sub>	A <sub>T</sub> (μmol/kg)	pCO <sub>2</sub> (μatm)	$\Omega_c$	$\Omega_a$
CTRL	37 $\pm$ 0.5	9.95 $\pm$ 0.11	8.18 $\pm$ 0.03	3283.2 $\pm$ 88.8	386.9 $\pm$ 26.2	6.2 $\pm$ 0.5	3.9 $\pm$ 0.3
Cd	37 $\pm$ 0.5	9.97 $\pm$ 0.06	8.16 $\pm$ 0.03	3334.2 $\pm$ 102.6	411.8 $\pm$ 35.8	6.1 $\pm$ 0.3	3.9 $\pm$ 0.2
A	37 $\pm$ 0.5	10.54 $\pm$ 0.08	7.40 $\pm$ 0.05	3364.1 $\pm$ 112.9	2882.2 $\pm$ 363.8	1.3 $\pm$ 0.2	0.8 $\pm$ 0.1
W	37 $\pm$ 0.5	14.95 $\pm$ 0.12	8.17 $\pm$ 0.03	3378.4 $\pm$ 121.2	416.8 $\pm$ 34.5	7.2 $\pm$ 0.5	4.7 $\pm$ 0.4
A-Cd	37 $\pm$ 0.5	10.04 $\pm$ 0.15	7.39 $\pm$ 0.02	3360.6 $\pm$ 36.8	2860.9 $\pm$ 207.2	1.2 $\pm$ 0.1	0.8 $\pm$ 0.1
W-Cd	37 $\pm$ 0.5	15.02 $\pm$ 0.11	8.17 $\pm$ 0.03	3350.5 $\pm$ 164.9	403.5 $\pm$ 53.1	7.3 $\pm$ 0.5	4.7 $\pm$ 0.3
A-W	37 $\pm$ 0.5	14.98 $\pm$ 0.05	7.39 $\pm$ 0.04	3354.5 $\pm$ 80.1	2916.3 $\pm$ 288.7	1.5 $\pm$ 0.2	1.0 $\pm$ 0.1
A-W-Cd	37 $\pm$ 0.5	14.92 $\pm$ 0.06	7.39 $\pm$ 0.02	3326.5 $\pm$ 67.1	2886.4 $\pm$ 174.1	1.5 $\pm$ 0.1	1.0 $\pm$ 0.1

624



625 **Figure 1** – Cd concentrations ( $\mu\text{g/g}$  dry weight) and level of metallothioneins (nmol/mg of proteins) in digestive  
626 gland (a and c) and gills (b and d) of mussels exposed to various treatments. Data are given as mean  
627 values  $\pm$  standard deviations ( $n=5$ ). Different letters indicate significant differences between group of means  
628 (ANOVA and SNK *post-hoc*). CTRL= Control; Cd= Cadmium; A= acidification; W= warming; A-Cd=  
629 acidification + Cd; W-Cd= warming + Cd; A-W= acidification + warming; A-W-Cd= acidification + warming +  
630 Cd.

631 **Figure 2** – Antioxidant defenses and oxidative stress biomarkers in digestive gland of mussels exposed to various  
632 treatments. CAT: catalase ( $\mu\text{mol/mg}$  proteins) (a), GSTs: glutathione S-transferases (nmol/mg proteins) (b), Se-Dep. GPx:  
633 Se-dependent glutathione peroxidases (nmol/mg proteins) (c) total GPx: sum of Se-dependent and Se-independent  
634 glutathione peroxidases (nmol/mg proteins) (d), GR: glutathione reductase (nmol/mg proteins) (e), TGSH: total  
635 glutathione ( $\mu\text{mol/g}$  wet weight) (f), TOSC ROO $\cdot$ : total oxyradical scavenging capacity toward peroxy radical (TOSC  
636 units/mg proteins) (g), TOSC HO $\cdot$ : total oxyradical scavenging capacity toward hydroxyl radical (TOSC units/mg  
637 proteins) (h), MDA: levels of malondialdehyde (mmol/g wet weight) (i), lipofuscin (intensity/ $\mu\text{m}^2$ ) (j) and neutral lipids  
638 (intensity/ $\mu\text{m}^2$ ) (k). Data are given as mean values  $\pm$  standard deviations ( $n=5$ ). Different letters indicate significant  
639 differences between group of means (ANOVA and SNK *post-hoc*). CTRL= Control; Cd= Cadmium; A= acidification;  
640 W= warming; A-Cd= acidification + Cd; W-Cd= warming + Cd; A-W= acidification + warming; A-W-Cd= acidification  
641 + warming + Cd.

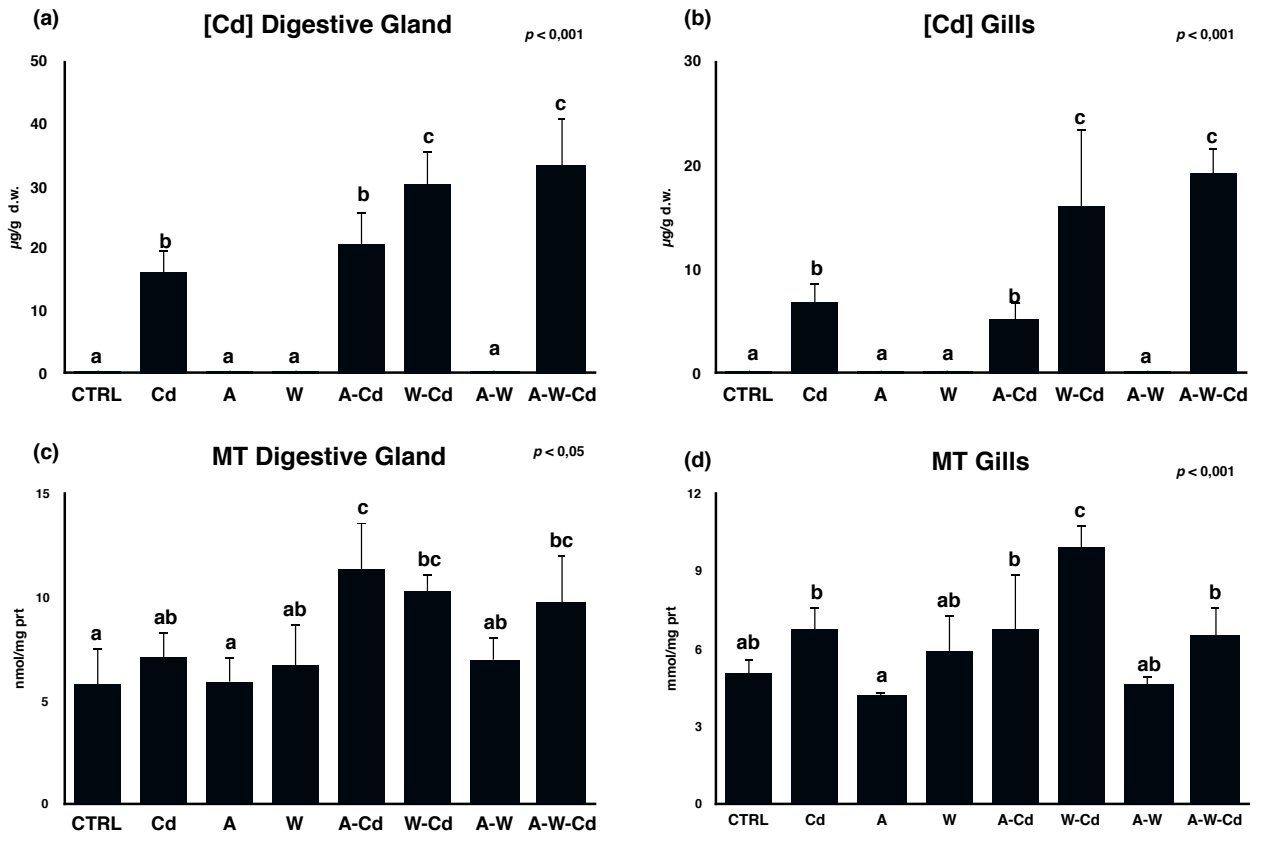
642 **Figure 3** - Antioxidant defenses and oxidative stress biomarkers in gills of mussels exposed to various treatments. CAT:  
643 catalase ( $\mu\text{mol/mg}$  proteins) (a), GSTs: glutathione S-transferases (nmol/mg proteins) (b), Se-Dep. GPx: Se-dependent  
644 glutathione peroxidases (nmol/mg proteins) (c) total GPx: sum of Se-dependent and Se-independent glutathione  
645 peroxidases (nmol/mg proteins) (d), GR: glutathione reductase (nmol/mg proteins) (e), TGSH: total glutathione ( $\mu\text{mol/g}$   
646 wet weight) (f), TOSC ROO $\cdot$ : total oxyradical scavenging capacity toward peroxy radical (TOSC units/mg proteins) (g),  
647 TOSC HO $\cdot$ : total oxyradical scavenging capacity toward hydroxyl radical (TOSC units/mg proteins) (h), MDA: levels  
648 of malondialdehyde (mmol/g wet weight) (i). Data are given as mean values  $\pm$  standard deviations ( $n=5$ ). Different letters  
649 indicate significant differences between group of means (ANOVA and SNK *post-hoc*). CTRL= Control; Cd= Cadmium;  
650 A= acidification; W= warming; A-Cd= acidification + Cd; W-Cd= warming + Cd; A-W= acidification + warming; A-W-  
651 Cd= acidification + warming + Cd.

652 **Figure 4** - Lysosomal membrane stability (a), phagocytosis rate (b), granulocytes/hyalinocytes ratio (c), DNA damage  
653 (d) and frequency of micronuclei (e) in haemocytes of mussels exposed to various treatments. Data are given as mean  
654 values  $\pm$  standard deviation ( $n=5$ ). Different letters indicate significant differences between group of means (ANOVA

655 and SNK *post-hoc*). CTRL= Control; Cd= Cadmium; A= acidification; W= warming; A-Cd= acidification + Cd; W-Cd=  
656 warming + Cd; A-W= acidification + warming; A-W-Cd= acidification + warming + Cd.

657 **Figure 5** - Weight of Evidence (WOE) classification of biomarkers data for the whole dataset of analyzed  
658 parameters in digestive gland and gills for each exposure condition. The quantitative hazard quotients (HQ) and the  
659 assigned class of hazard are given.

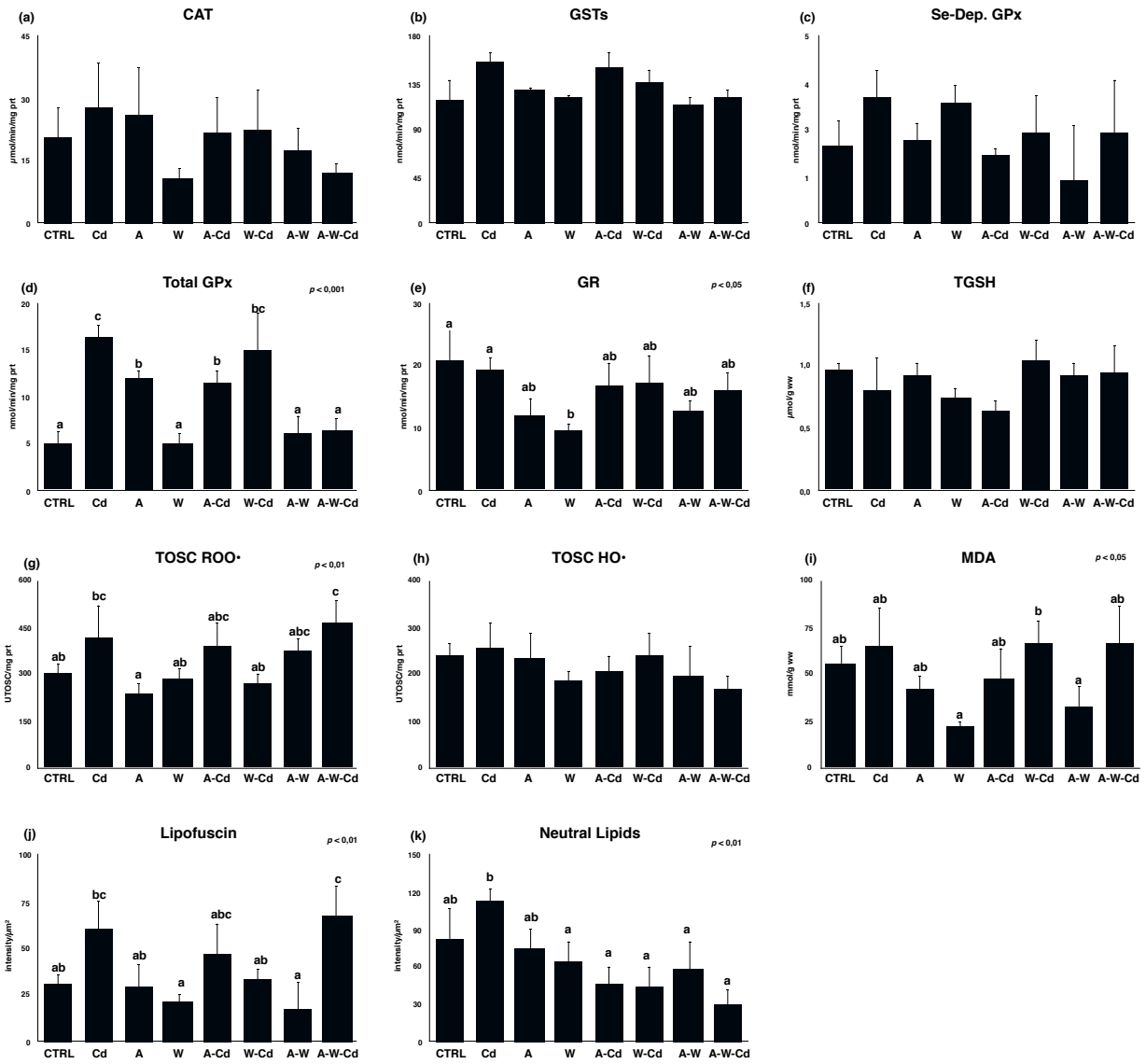
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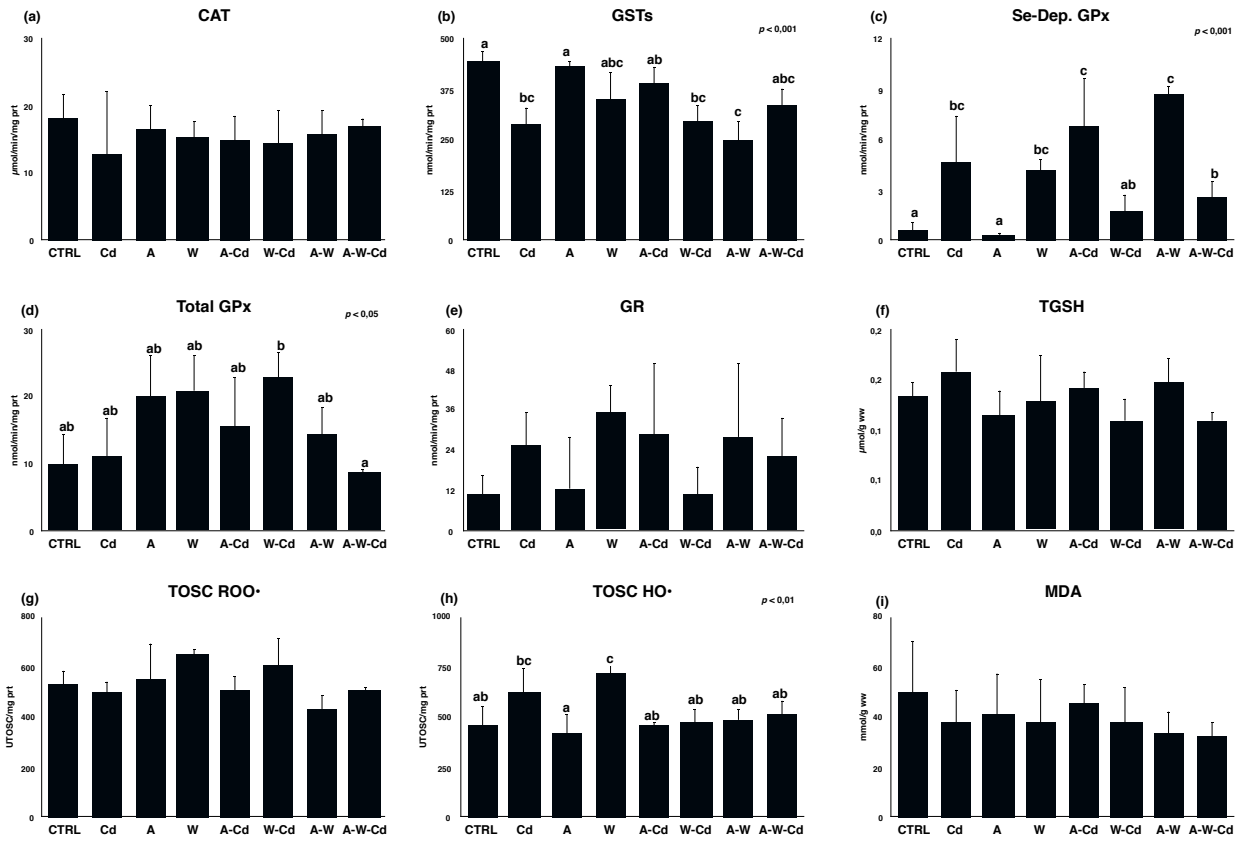
662 **Figure 1.**

663



664

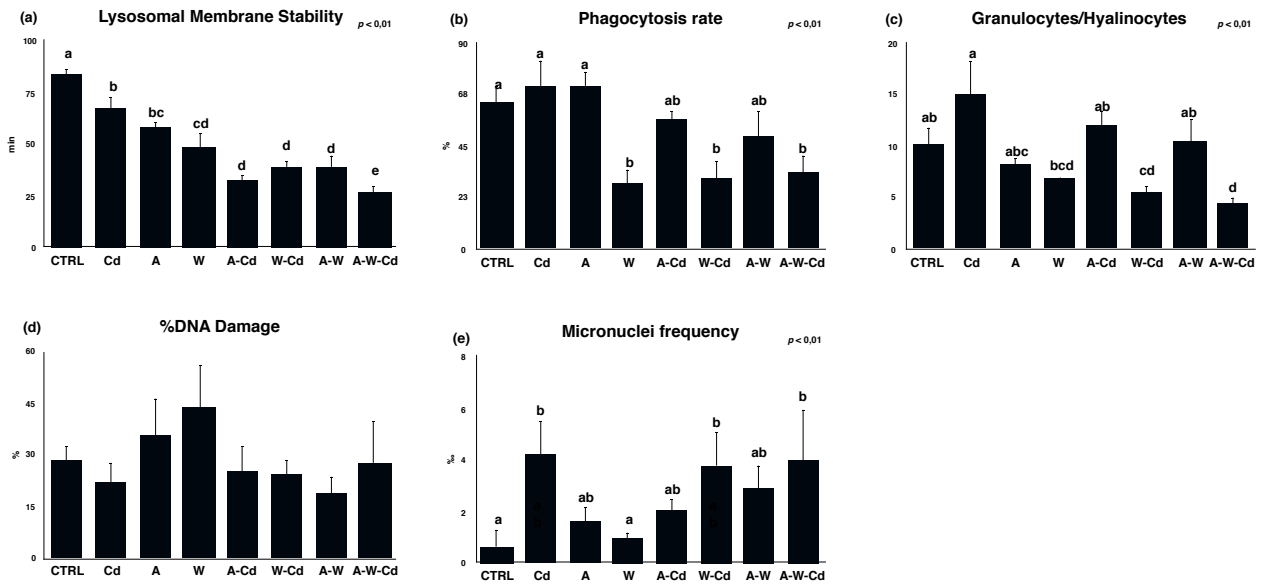
665 **Figure 2.**



666

667

Figure 3.



668

669

Figure 4.

Experimental Treatment	Digestive gland			Gills		
	Hazard Quotient (HQ)	Class of Hazard	Level	Hazard Quotient (HQ)	Class of Hazard	Level
Cd	9.87	MODERATE		13.82	MODERATE	
A	4.60	SLIGHT		7.48	MODERATE	
W	2.31	SLIGHT		31.16	MODERATE	
A-Cd	6.66	MODERATE		39.55	MODERATE	
W-Cd	8.57	MODERATE		9.66	MODERATE	
A-W	0	SLIGHT		50.84	MODERATE	
A-W-Cd	2.86	SLIGHT		12.47	MODERATE	

670  
671

Figure 5.

