Heavy Metal Contamination in the Western Indian Ocean (A Review)

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Abstract
Western Indian Ocean Coast has many potential marine ecosystems such as mangrove, seagrass meadows, macroalgae, and coral reefs. It is largely unspoiled environment however, tourism and population growth in coastal urban centres, industrialization, are presenting a risk of pollutants input to the marine environment of the Western Indian Ocean. Mining, shipping and agricultural activities also input contaminants into the marine environment via runoff, vessel operations and accidental spillage. Heavy metals are among the pollutants that are expected to increase in the marine environment of the Western Indian Ocean. The increase in heavy metal pollution can pose a serious health problem to marine organism and human through food chain. This paper reviews studies on heavy metal contamination in the Western Indian Ocean. It covers heavy metal studies in the sediments, biota, particulates and seawater collected in different sites. In comparison to other regions, only few studies have been conducted in the Western Indian Ocean and are localized in some certain areas. Most of these studies were conducted in Kenyan and Tanzanian coasts while few of them were conducted in Mauritius, Somalia and Reunion. No standard or common method has been reported for the analysis or monitoring of heavy metals in the Western Indian Ocean.