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A smartphone-controlled amperometric immunosensor for the detection of Pacific ciguatoxins in fish

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Abstract

Ciguatoxins (CTXs) are marine neurotoxins produced by microalgae of the genera *Gambierdiscus* and *Fukuyoa*. CTXs may reach humans through food webs and cause ciguatera fish poisoning (CFP). An immunosensor for the detection of Pacific CTXs in fish was developed using multiwalled carbon nanotube (MWCNT)-modified carbon electrodes and a smartphone-controlled potentiostat. The biosensor attained a limit of detection (LOD) and a limit of quantification (LOQ) of 6 and 27 pg/mL of CTX1B, respectively, which were 0.001 and 0.005 µg/kg in fish flesh. In the analysis of fish samples from Japan and Fiji, excellent correlations were found with sandwich enzyme-linked immunosorbent assays (ELISAs), a cell-based assay (CBA) and liquid chromatography coupled to tandem mass spectrometry (LC-MS/MS). Stability of at least 3 months at -20 °C was predicted. In just over 2 h, the biosensor provides reliable, accurate and precise Pacific CTX contents in fish extracts, being suitable for monitoring and research programs.

Keywords: Pacific ciguatoxins (CTXs), fish, biosensor, enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA), cell-based assay (CBA), liquid chromatography coupled to tandem mass spectrometry (LC-MS/MS).

1. INTRODUCTION

Ciguatoxins (CTXs) are potent neurotoxins produced by microalgae of the genera *Gambierdiscus* and *Fukuyoa* (Litaker et al., 2017). These benthic dinoflagellates are grazed by herbivorous fishes, which are then eaten by carnivorous fishes, and therefore may reach human consumers and cause ciguatera fish poisoning (CFP) (Soliño & Costa, 2020). Throughout the transfer of CTXs from the microalgae, metabolization processes in the fish result in CTX transformations increasing the spectrum of CTX derivatives (Ikehara, Kuniyoshi, Oshiro, & Yasumoto, 2017). P-CTX-1 (CTX1B) is the most potent CTX congener, thought to be responsible for the majority of symptoms associated with CFP in the Pacific. Moreover, CTX3C and CTX4A derivatives have been described from the Pacific Ocean (Satake, Murata, & Yasumoto, 1993; Satake, Ishibashi, Legrand, & Yasumoto, 1996). In the Caribbean Sea and the East Atlantic Ocean, structurally different Caribbean CTXs (C-CTXs) are present (Vernoux and Lewis, 1997; Estevez, Leao, Yasumoto, Dickey, & Gago-Martinez, 2019). Indian CTXs (I-CTXs) have been reported from the Indian Ocean, although their structures are unclear (Hamilton, Hurbungs, Jones, & Lewis, 2002; Diogène et al.,

41 2017). At cellular level, CTXs act on the voltage-gated sodium channels (VGSCs), blocking them
42 in an open position.

43 CFP is the most common and one of the most relevant seafood-borne diseases worldwide,
44 affecting 10000 to 500000 people per year, and probably more due to under-diagnosis and
45 under-reporting (Friedman et al., 2017; Chinain, Gatti, Darius, Quod, & Tester, 2021). CFP is
46 characterized by severe neurological, gastrointestinal and cardiovascular disorders that usually
47 abate within a few days or weeks but that can persist for months or years (Lehane & Lewis, 2000;
48 Anadon, Ares, Martinez, Martinez-Larranaga, & Martinez, 2021). CTXs are tasteless, colorless,
49 odorless and stable to acid, heat and freezing. Therefore, CFP cannot be prevented by any
50 storage, preparation or cooking methods.

51 Although *Gambierdiscus* and *Fukuyoa* are endemic from tropical and subtropical regions, they
52 have been recently detected in more temperate regions (Dickey & Plakas, 2010; Tudó et al.,
53 2020b). CFP has geographically expanded, certainly due to a broader distribution of CTX-
54 producing microalgae in temperate waters, resulting in the presence of CTXs in fish from areas
55 where no CFP cases had been reported (e.g., Madeira and the Canary Islands). This microalgae
56 expansion is potentially due to aquatic environmental changes such as sea surface temperature
57 increase, but also other causes such as transport via ship's ballast water. In addition, more CFP
58 cases have been recorded in countries from temperate areas due to international seafood trade
59 and travel to endemic areas (Lange, Snyder, & Fudala, 1992).

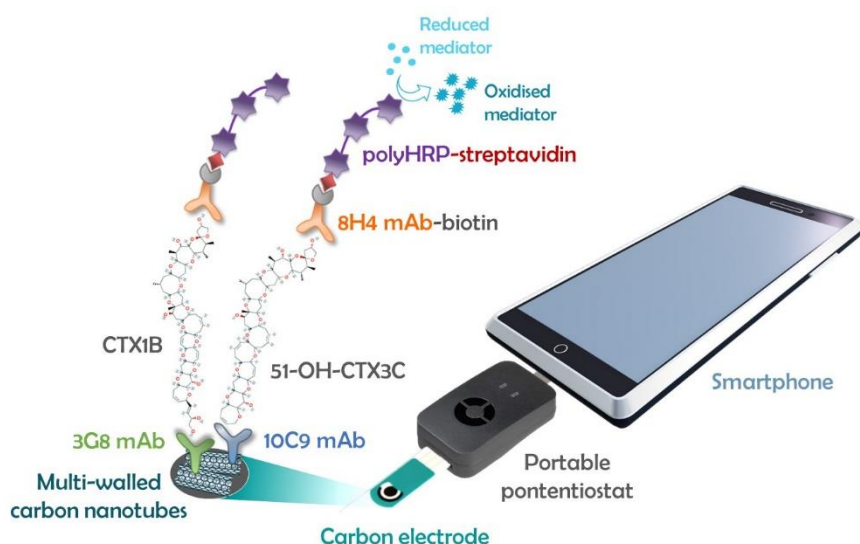
60 In the Pacific, mild CFP outbreaks occurred after exposure to fish containing 0.1 µg/kg P-CTX-1
61 equivalent toxicity estimated using the mouse bioassay (MBA) (Lehane and Lewis, 2000). In the
62 Caribbean, a value of 1.0 µg/kg C-CTX-1 equivalent toxicity was estimated also using the MBA
63 (Vernoux and Lewis, 1997). Applying a 10-fold safety factor, the United States Food and Drug
64 Administration has proposed guidance levels of 0.01 µg/kg of P-CTX-1 (CTX1B) equivalents and
65 0.1 µg/kg of C-CTX-1 equivalents in fish (US FDA, 2020). This value has also been recommended
66 by the European Food Safety (EFSA) to cover all CTX-group toxins that could be present in fish
67 (EFSA, 2010). In Europe, the current legislation only requires that no fish products with CTXs are
68 placed on the market (Commission Regulation (EC) No. 853/2004). Australia and New Zealand
69 provide guidelines on possible ciguateric fish species and areas (FSANZ, 2006). In Japan, some
70 fish species associated to CFP are banned to import and the local governments recommend
71 rejecting certain fish species caught in Japan (MHW, 2001; Oshiro et al., 2021a).

72 Detection of CTXs is a big challenge because of the complexity and variety of their chemical
73 structures, the long and tedious protocols for their extraction from natural samples, and the
74 extremely sensitive analysis required to detect less than 0.01 µg/kg (Loeffler et al., 2021).
75 Among the different detection methods, the MBA had been the most used (Hoffman, Granade,
76 & McMillan, 1983), followed by the cell-based assay (CBA) (Manger, Leja, Lee, Hungerford, &
77 Wekell, 1993) and instrumental analysis techniques such as liquid chromatography coupled to
78 tandem mass spectrometry (LC-MS/MS) (Lewis, Yang, & Jones, 2009; Yogi, Oshiro, Inafuku,
79 Hirama, & Yasumoto, 2011). Some receptor-binding assays (RBAs) for CTXs have also been
80 approached (Dechraoui et al., 2005). Polyclonal (Hokama, Banner, & Boylan, 1977) and
81 monoclonal (Hokama, Hong, Isobe, Ichikawa, & Yasumoto, 1992) antibodies have been
82 produced for the development of immunoassays for the detection of CTXs. These immunoassays
83 were later formatted into the immunostrip tests with the commercial names Cigua-Check and
84 Ciguatetect. However, their reliability was dubious (Dickey, Granade, & McClure, 1994). Since
85 2006, Tsumuraya and co-workers have successfully produced new monoclonal antibodies
86 (mAbs) against rationally designed synthetic CTX haptens and have developed sandwich

87 enzyme-linked immunosorbent assays (ELISAs) for some Pacific CTXs (CTX1B, 54-deoxyCTX1B,
88 CTX3C and 51-hydroxyCTX3C) (Tsumuraya et al., 2006; Tsumuraya, Fujii, & Hirama, 2010;
89 Tsumuraya, Takeuchi, Yamashita, Fujii, & Hirama, 2012; Tsumuraya, Sato, Hirama, & Fujii, 2018).
90 These mAbs, which are highly specific and sensitive, circumvent the cross-reactivity problems
91 previously observed with other antibodies (Hokama, Banner, & Boylan, 1977).

92 The different techniques for the detection of CTXs have advantages and limitations. The MBA
93 provides toxicological information of a sample, is simple to perform and does not require
94 extensive sample conditioning, but is not specific and sensitive enough, requires high amounts
95 of fish tissue, and has ethical concerns. The CBA also provides a composite toxicological
96 response, since it is based on the mode of action of CTXs on cells (which interact at site 5 of the
97 VGSCs, leaving them in a permanent open state), and is highly sensitive, therefore requiring
98 small amounts of fish tissue and CTX calibrants, but may not be specific (it also recognizes
99 brevetoxins and other potentially interfering compounds with the same mode of action), is time-
100 consuming, has high variability, and requires standardization, which is difficult to achieve when
101 using living material. Both toxicological approaches respond to many CTX congeners, providing
102 a composite toxicity evaluation. Instrumental analysis techniques, where the detection is based
103 on physico-chemical and structural properties of CTXs, allow unambiguous quantifications of
104 some CTX congeners, are very specific, and sensitivity may be appropriate, but usually require
105 high amounts of fish tissue, long and tedious sample clean-up processes, are complex,
106 expensive, and highly trained personnel is required. Instrumental analysis provides information
107 on individual compounds, but it may not cover all CTX congeners, due to unavailability of some
108 reference materials. RBAs are appropriate screening tools, also based on the interaction of CTXs
109 with the VGSCs at site 5, and therefore on toxicity, but may be not specific and sensitive enough,
110 and sometimes require radioactivity detection. Immunoassays are sensitive and easy to
111 implement, but require high-quality antibody production, may be affected by cross-reactivity
112 with other compounds, and provide a composite response related to the structure. Combination
113 of techniques is often the key to success.

114 The threat that the presence of CTXs in fish poses to human health and some limitations of the
115 current analytical methodologies highlight the need for fast and reliable screening methods. To
116 this purpose, our group has recently developed an electrochemical immunosensor and has
117 applied it to the analysis of fish (Leonardo et al., 2020) and microalgae samples (Gaiani et al.,
118 2020; Tudó et al., 2020a). This immunosensor uses the highly specific and sensitive mAbs
119 produced by Tsumuraya and co-workers, previously mentioned. The work presented herein
120 aims to simplify even more the protocol and make a portable biosensor. To this purpose, capture
121 mAbs were immobilized on multiwalled carbon nanotube (MWCNT)-modified carbon electrodes
122 instead of magnetic beads. The sandwich assay was then conducted, and amperometric signals
123 were measured with a smartphone-controlled potentiostat (Fig. 1). The electrochemical
124 immunosensor was applied to the analysis of fish samples from Japan and Fiji, and results were
125 compared with those obtained with sandwich ELISAs, a CBA and LC-MS/MS.



126

127 **Figure 1.** Representation of the smartphone-controlled biosensor for the detection of Pacific
 128 CTXs.

129 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

130 2.1. Reagents and materials

131 For the extraction of CTXs from fish flesh, acetone, hexane, and ethyl acetate of the Primepure
 132 grade, diethyl ether of guaranteed reagent grade, and methanol (MeOH) and acetonitrile (ACN)
 133 of liquid chromatography-mass spectrometry (LC-MS) grade were purchased from Kanto
 134 Chemical Co., Inc. (Tokyo, Japan). For the biosensor, 4-morpholineethanesulfonic acid (MES)
 135 hydrate, N-(3-dimethylaminopropyl)-N'-ethylcarbodiimide hydrochloride (EDC), N-
 136 hydroxysuccinimide (NHS), potassium phosphate monobasic, potassium phosphate dibasic,
 137 potassium chloride, Tween®-20, bovine serum albumin (BSA), anti-mouse IgG (whole molecule)-
 138 horseradish peroxidase antibody produced in rabbit (IgG-HRP), and 3,3',5,5'-
 139 tetramethylbenzidine (TMB) liquid substrate were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich (Tres Cantos,
 140 Spain). PolyHRP-streptavidin was obtained from Thermo Fisher (Barcelona, Spain). Milli-Q®
 141 water (Millipore, Bedford, MA, USA) was used to prepare all solutions. For the ELISAs, F96 Nunc
 142 MaxiSorp immunoplate microtiter wells were obtained from Thermo Fischer Scientific
 143 (Waltham, MA, USA). Potassium phosphate monobasic, sodium phosphate dibasic
 144 dodecahydrate, sodium chloride, sucrose, Tween®-20, tris(hydroxymethyl)aminomethane,
 145 hydrochloric acid and dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) of guaranteed reagent grade were purchased
 146 from Nacalai Tesque, Inc. (Kyoto, Japan). Proclin 300 was obtained from Sigma-Aldrich (St. Louis,
 147 MO, USA). Blocking Reagents N101 and N102 were purchased from NOF Corporation (Tokyo,
 148 Japan). The buffer solutions were prepared as in previous works (Tsumuraya, Sato, Hiram, &
 149 Fujii, 2018). *p*-Nitrophenyl phosphate (Alkaline Phosphatase Yellow Liquid Substrate System for
 150 ELISA) was obtained from Sigma (Kanagawa, Japan) and AttoPhos AP Fluorescent Substrate
 151 System was obtained from Promega (Madison, WI, USA). For the CBA, neuroblastoma murine
 152 cells (Neuro-2a) were purchased from ATCC LGC standards (USA). Fetal bovine serum (FBS), L-
 153 glutamine solution, ouabain, veratridine, phosphate buffered saline (PBS), penicillin,
 154 streptomycin, RPMI-1640 medium, sodium pyruvate and thiazolyl blue tetrazolium bromide
 155 (MTT) were purchased from Merck KGaA (Gernsheim, Germany). DMSO was purchased from
 156 Chemlab (Spain). For LC-MS/MS analysis, ammonium formate solution (1 M) and formic acid

157 were of high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) grade (Wako Chemical Industry, Ltd.,
158 Osaka, Japan), and Milli-Q® water (Millipore, Bedford, MA, USA) was used.

159 Stock 3G8, 10C9 and 8H4 mAb solutions, previously prepared at Osaka Prefecture University
160 (OPU), were at 6.88, 6.61 and 4.24 mg/mL, respectively. Biotin labelling of the 8H4 mAb (for the
161 biosensor) was performed with the EZ-Link™ NHS-PEG4 Biotinylation Kit from Thermo Fisher
162 (Barcelona, Spain). Alkaline phosphatase (ALP) labelling of the 8H4 mAb (for the ELISAs) was
163 performed with the LYNX Rapid Alkaline Phosphatase Antibody Conjugation Kit (BIO-RAD,
164 California, USA).

165 The purified CTX1B used for the biosensor and the CBA calibration curves was obtained from
166 Prof. Richard J. Lewis (The Queensland University, Australia) and cross-calibrated in relation to
167 the NMR-quantified CTX1B reference material provided by Prof. Takeshi Yasumoto (Japan Food
168 Research Laboratories (JFRL)). The CTX1B and CTX3C calibrants used for the ELISA were prepared
169 from synthesized ones at Tohoku University (Hirama et al., 2001; Inoue et al., 2006) and cross-
170 calibrated in relation to CTX calibrants provided by JFRL. The mixed-CTXs calibrant solution used
171 in LC-MS/MS analysis, consisting of CTX1B, 52-*epi*-54-deoxyCTX1B, 54-deoxyCTX1B, CTX4A,
172 CTX4B, 2,3-dihydroxyCTX3C, 51-hydroxyCTX3C, 49-*epi*CTX3C and CTX3C, was prepared at the
173 National Institute of Health Sciences (NIHS) using purified or semi-purified CTXs provided by
174 Prof. Takeshi Yasumoto (JFRL). The levels of CTXs in the mixture were determined using the
175 CTX1B (43.3 ± 1.3 ng), 52-*epi*-54-deoxyCTX1B (58.4 ± 2.5 ng), CTX4A (55.1 ± 5.2 ng), 51-
176 hydroxyCTX3C (45.3 ± 7.2 ng) and CTX3C (38.5 ± 2.6 ng) calibrants provided by JFRL. Since no
177 NMR-quantified reference materials were available for the analogues of 54-deoxyCTX1B, CTX4B,
178 2,3-dihydroxyCTX3C and 49-*epi*CTX3C, they were quantified using the calibration curves of 52-
179 *epi*-54-deoxyCTX1B, CTX4A, 51-hydroxyCTX3C and CTX3C, respectively.

180 Screen-printed carbon electrodes modified with carboxyl-functionalized multi-walled carbon
181 nanotubes (DRP-110CNT) were purchased from Metrohm DropSens S.L. (Oviedo, Spain).
182 Amperometric measurements were performed with a PalmSens Sensit Smart potentiostat
183 (Houte, The Netherlands). PalmSens PStouch software was used to collect and evaluate data.

184 **2.2. Fish samples**

185 Fish samples used were judged as both non-contaminated and CTXs-contaminated by
186 preliminary analysis by LC-MS/MS or our previous studies (Oshiro et al., 2021a; Oshiro,
187 Tomikawa, Kuniyoshi, Ishikawa, & Toyofuku, 2021b; Oshiro et al., 2021c). Non-contaminated
188 specimens (specimens 1-4) included *Lutjanus bohar* (two two-spot red snappers from Okinawa),
189 *Lutjanus monostigma* (one one-spot snapper individual from Kagoshima) and *Variola louti* (one
190 yellow-edged lyretail from Ehime) from Japan. Contaminated specimens (specimens 6-17)
191 included *L. bohar* (five two-spot red snappers from Okinawa and two from Wakayama),
192 *L. monostigma* (one one-spot snapper from Kagoshima and two from Okinawa), *V. louti* (one
193 yellow-edged lyretail from Okinawa) and *Variola albimarginata* (one white-edged lyretail from
194 Okinawa) from Japan. Furthermore, one individual of *Gymnothorax javanicus* (giant moray)
195 (specimen 5) purchased at the Viti Levu Island, Fiji (Oshiro, Tomikawa, Kuniyoshi, Ishikawa, &
196 Toyofuku, 2021b) was used. In Figure S1, a map with the fish collection sites is shown, and in
197 Table S1, the weight and length of the fishes are provided. Those fishes were destined for human
198 consumption and obtained from fishers; some of them had been disapproved and recalled from
199 the market (Table S1). LC-MS/MS analysis of this specimen had revealed CTXs in the ACN eluate
200 solution, but not in the MeOH eluate solution (Oshiro, Tomikawa, Kuniyoshi, Ishikawa, &
201 Toyofuku, 2021b). In the current work, this MeOH eluate solution was used to evaluate the

202 CTX1B recovery, as no other *G. javanicus* specimens were available. All specimens used were
203 raw (uncooked) flesh except for specimen 12 which was stewed with soy source (“Nitsuke” in
204 Japanese).

205 **2.3. CTXs extraction**

206 The fish extracts were prepared at NIHS as described in previous studies (Oshiro et al., 2021a;
207 Oshiro, Tomikawa, Kuniyoshi, Ishikawa, & Toyofuku, 2021b; Oshiro et al., 2021c). The fish flesh
208 (skin not included) (5 g) was extracted with acetone (15 mL, twice), and the combined extracts
209 were evaporated to remove acetone. The remaining aqueous portions were partitioned with
210 diethyl ether (5 mL, twice), and the organic layer was collected and dried completely. The dried
211 materials were dissolved in 90% MeOH (v/v, 1.5 mL), defatted with hexane (3 mL, twice) and the
212 remaining solution was dried completely to obtain the crude extract. The crude extract was
213 dissolved in ethyl acetate-MeOH (9:1 v/v, 5 mL) and passed through a Florisil cartridge column
214 (500 mg, GL Sciences Inc., Tokyo, Japan). The eluate solution was dried, and the residue was
215 dissolved in ACN (5 mL) and applied to a primary and secondary amine (PSA) cartridge column
216 (200 mg, GL Sciences Inc., Tokyo, Japan) and MeOH (3 mL) was applied to the column. Both ACN
217 and MeOH eluate solutions were dried and dissolved in MeOH (1 mL), which contained 5 g
218 equivalents of fish flesh, and analyzed with LC-MS/MS. Three 250- μ L portions of the MeOH
219 eluate solutions were taken into screw cap vials (in the cases of samples 12, 16 and 17, the
220 volumes taken were 200, 100, and 150 μ L, respectively), and dried under a nitrogen stream. The
221 ACN eluate solutions of specimens 7 and 8 were analyzed, since some CTX3C analogues were
222 detected in our previous study by LC-MS/MS.

223 One of three sets of the dried fish extract samples was shipped to OPU with dry ice to analyze
224 CTXs by the ELISAs. Another set was shipped to IRTA to analyze CTXs by the electrochemical
225 biosensor and the CBA. The remaining set of the samples were analyzed by LC-MS/MS at NIHS.
226 These fish extracts were dissolved with MeOH, ACN or DMSO to make fish extract solutions at
227 5 g equivalents of fish flesh/mL.

228 **2.4. Electrochemical immunosensor**

229 The protocol for the construction of the electrochemical immunosensor and the analysis of
230 samples is depicted in Figure 2. The carboxyl groups of the electrodes were activated by
231 incubation with 25 μ L of 50 mg/mL EDC and 25 μ L of 50 mg/mL NHS (both in 25 mM MES,
232 pH 5.0) for 30 min. After washing, 50 μ L of a 3G8+10C9 mAb mixture in MES (from 1/50 to
233 1/2000 dilution for protocol optimization and 1/500 dilution (14 and 13 μ g/mL for 3G8 and 10C9,
234 respectively) for the final biosensor) was incubated for 1 hour. Electrodes were washed and
235 exposed to 50 μ L of purified CTX1B (from 800 to 3.12 pg/mL for the calibration curves) or fish
236 extract (at 5, 2.5 and 1.25 g equivalents of fish flesh/mL) in 100 mM PBS, pH 7.2, containing
237 0.05% v/v Tween[®]-20, both previously evaporated, for 30 min. After washing, a blocking step
238 was performed with 50 μ L of PBS-Tween-BSA (PBS-Tween containing 2% w/v BSA) for 30 min.
239 Electrodes were washed and incubated with 50 μ L of biotin-8H4 mAb in PBS-Tween-BSA (from
240 1/100 to 1/5000 dilution for protocol optimization and 1/1000 dilution for the final biosensor)
241 for 30 min. After washing, electrodes were incubated with 50 μ L of polyHRP-streptavidin in PBS-
242 Tween-BSA (from 1/100 to 1/1000 dilution for protocol optimization and 1/1000 dilution
243 (2 μ g/mL) for the final biosensor) for 30 min. Finally, electrodes were washed and 50 μ L of TMB
244 was added. After a 2-min incubation, the TMB reduction current was measured using
245 amperometry, applying -0.2 V (vs. Ag) for 5 s. The negative reaction current intensities were

246 taken and expressed in absolute value. All incubations were performed at room temperature.
247 Measurements were performed in triplicate.

248 **2.5. ELISAs**

249 Three different sandwich ELISAs were performed: a colorimetric ELISA for the CTX1B series, a
250 fluorescent ELISA for the CTX1B series, and a fluorescent ELISA for the CTX3C series (Tsumuraya,
251 Sato, Hirama, & Fujii, 2018). Briefly, to detect the CTX1B series, microtiter wells were coated
252 with 100 μ L of 3G8 mAb (10 μ g/mL) in PBS overnight. Then, 400 μ L of blocking buffer was
253 incubated for 1 h. After washing, 100 μ L of CTX1B calibrant serially diluted with D1 buffer or fish
254 extract (redissolved in DMSO at 5 g equivalents of fish flesh/mL and 10-fold diluted with D1
255 buffer) was added and incubated for 1 h. After washing, 100 μ L of ALP-8H4 (2 μ g/mL) in D2 buffer
256 was incubated for 1 h. After washing, 100 μ L of *p*-nitrophenyl phosphate were incubated for 10-
257 30 min and then, absorbance was measured at 405 nm. For the samples with low CTX1B
258 contents, the fluorescent ELISA was applied. To detect the CTX3C series, the 10C9 mAb was used
259 to coat the microtiter wells, and detection was performed using the fluorescent ELISA. All
260 incubations were performed at room temperature. Measurements were performed in triplicate.

261 **2.6. CBA**

262 The CBA was performed as previously described (Diogène et al., 2017). Briefly, Neuro-2a cells
263 (ATCC, CCL131) were seeded in a 96-well microplate in 200 μ L of RPMI medium containing 5%
264 v/v fetal bovine serum (RPMI-FBS) at 34000 cell/well and incubated at 37 °C in a 5% CO₂ humid
265 atmosphere for 24 h. Prior to exposure to purified CTX1B (from 120 to 0.96 pg/mL for the
266 calibration curves) or fish extract (at 5, 2.5 and 1.25 g equivalents of fish flesh/mL), some Neuro-
267 2a cells were pre-treated with 100 μ M ouabain and 10 μ M veratridine (concentration in the
268 wells). Purified CTX1B or fish extract were dried, reconstituted in 200 μ L of RPMI-FBS medium,
269 serially diluted, and 10 μ L was added to the wells with and without ouabain/veratridine pre-
270 treatment (final volume of 230 μ L). After 24 h, cell viability was measured using the MTT assay
271 (Manger, Leja, Lee, Hungerford, & Wekell, 1993) recording the absorbance at 570 nm with a
272 Microplate Reader KC4 from BIO-TEK Instruments Inc. (Winooski, VT, USA). Measurements were
273 performed in triplicate.

274 **2.7. LC-MS/MS analysis**

275 LC-MS/MS analyses were carried out as described previously reported (Oshiro et al. 2021a;
276 Oshiro, Tomikawa, Kuniyoshi, Ishikawa, & Toyofuku, 2021b) using an Agilent (Santa Clara, CA)
277 1290 HPLC system coupled to an Agilent 6460 Triple Quadrupole MS instrument. Dried samples
278 were dissolved in respective volume of MeOH (250, 200, 150 or 100 μ L as described in above)
279 to make 5 g equivalents of fish flesh/mL solutions. A volume of 5 μ L of solution was injected into
280 a Zorbax Eclipse Plus C18 column (2.1 \times 50 mm id, 1.8 μ m, Agilent Technologies, Santa Clara, CA,
281 USA), at 40 °C. The eluate solution A was water containing 5 mM ammonium formate and 0.1%
282 formic acid and the eluate solution B was MeOH. The gradient system (gradient I) was as follows:
283 0.0-0.25 min (60%B), 0.25-0.50 min (60-75%B), 0.50-12.0 min (75%B), 12.0-14.0 min (90%B),
284 14.1-20 min (100%B). When the presence of an interfering substance was suspected, the sample
285 was re-analyzed using another gradient system (gradient II: 0-0.25 min (50%B), 0.25-0.5 min (50-
286 65%B), 0.5-25 min(65-80%B), 25-27 min (80%B), 27-33 min (100%B)). The flow rate was
287 0.4 mL/min. The target toxins were ionized with electron spray ionization (ESI) equipped with
288 Agilent Jet Stream, and positive ions were monitored with a multiple reaction monitoring (MRM)
289 mode. Since [M+Na]⁺ ions were stable and gave no fragment ions, [M+Na]⁺ of each analogue

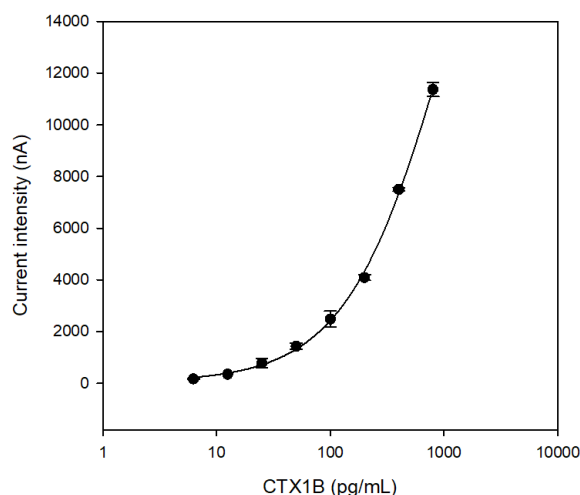
290 was set for both precursor and product ions ($[M+Na]^+ > [M+Na]^+$), with high collision energy to
291 achieve sensitive analysis. Optimized MS parameters were: dry gas N_2 , 300 °C, 10 L/min;
292 nebulizer gas N_2 , 50 psi; sheath gas N_2 , 380 °C, 11 L/min; capillary voltage 5000 V; fragmentor
293 voltage 300 V; collision gas N_2 , collision energy 40 eV. The limit of detection (LOD) and the limit
294 of quantitation (LOQ) values of CTX1B, 52-*epi*-54-deoxyCTX1B, and 54-deoxyCTX1B were
295 0.001 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ and 0.005 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$, respectively. Since no reference material of 2,3,51-
296 trihydroxyCTX3C was available, it was deduced from the m/z of $[M+Na]^+$ and retention time, as
297 described in previous manuscripts (Yogi, Oshiro, Inafuku, HIRAMA, & Yasumoto, 2011; Oshiro et
298 al., 2021c), and quantified using a calibration curve of the 51-hydroxyCTX3C.

299 **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

300 **3.1. Immunosensor optimization**

301 The concentration of the different components of the biosensor was optimized. First, the
302 capture mAb mixture (3G8+10C9) dilution was optimized using non-limiting detector mAb (8H4)
303 and polyHRP-streptavidin dilutions and 400 pg/mL of CTX1B. Several dilutions were tested (from
304 1/50 to 1/2000). Electrochemical signals were constant from 1/50 to 1/500 and started to
305 decrease at 1/1000 and more drastically at 1/2000. Therefore, the 1/500 3G8+10C9 dilution was
306 chosen for subsequent experiments. Then, the detector mAb (biotinylated 8H4) dilution was
307 tested (from 1/100 to 1/5000). No differences in the electrochemical signals were observed from
308 1/100 to 1/2000, which started to decrease at 1/5000. Additionally, non-specific adsorption
309 (response in the absence of CTX1B) was observed at 1/100 and 1/200 but disappeared at lower
310 mAb concentrations. Therefore, the 1/1000 biotinylated 8H4 dilution was chosen for
311 subsequent experiments (to ensure that the biotinylated 8H4 mAb concentration was not a
312 limiting parameter). Finally, several polyHRP-streptavidin dilutions were tested (from 1/100 to
313 1/2000). In this case, electrochemical signals decreased with the dilution and no plateau was
314 observed. Non-specific adsorption was observed from 1/100 to 1/500 but disappeared at lower
315 polyHRP-streptavidin concentrations. The best signal-to-noise ratio was observed at 1/1000
316 polyHRP-streptavidin dilution, which was chosen for further experiments.

317 Once the experimental parameters were optimized, the calibration curve for CTX1B was
318 constructed (Fig. 3). CTX1B was chosen as a model CTX because the only existing guidance level,
319 provided by the FDA, is expressed in CTX1B equivalents ($\leq 0.01 \mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$). No saturation was
320 observed at high CTX1B concentrations, indicating that the working range of the immunosensor
321 is probably wider than the tested concentrations. Higher CTX1B concentrations were not used
322 because of the high price and scarcity of CTX1B. Nevertheless, the working range was well over
323 2 orders of magnitude. LOD and LOQ values of 6 and 27 pg/mL , respectively, were obtained.
324 These values are similar to those obtained with the magnetic bead-based immunosensor (2 and
325 3 pg/mL) (Leonardo et al., 2020). A considerable advantage of the current biosensor is that
326 1/500 dilution is used for the immobilization of the capture mAbs, which is 10-fold lower than
327 in our previous work and represents a substantially lower cost. Previous works suggest that the
328 electrodes modified with capture mAbs could be reused (Leonardo et al., 2018), saving both
329 mAbs and screen-printed carbon electrodes, and further reducing the cost.



330

331 **Figure 3.** Calibration curve for CTX1B obtained using the smartphone-controlled biosensor
 332 (reduction current intensities are in absolute value). Values are background-subtracted.
 333 Measurements were performed in triplicate.

334 **3.2. Immunosensor performance in the presence of fish matrix**

335 To evaluate the effect of the fish flesh matrix components on the immunosensor performance,
 336 MeOH eluate solutions from PSA cartridge columns of *L. bohar*, *L. monostigma*, *V. louti* and
 337 *G. javanicus* (at 5 g equivalents of fish flesh/mL), specimens considered as negative by LC-
 338 MS/MS (no CTXs detected), were spiked with 400 pg/mL of CTX1B (equivalent to 0.08 µg/kg in
 339 the fish flesh). The purpose of this experiment was to ensure that the biosensor was responding
 340 to Pacific CTXs in fish extracts. Spiked extracts were analyzed with the biosensor and results
 341 were compared to those obtained in buffer. Recovery values were 99.1±3.4, 104.4±0.7, 96.9±0.2
 342 and 92.3±1.9% for *L. bohar*, *L. monostigma*, *V. louti* and *G. javanicus*, respectively (the small
 343 amounts of CTX3C (0.003 µg/kg) detected with the fluorescent ELISA for the CTX3C series in the
 344 MeOH eluate solution of this *G. javanicus* specimen, certainly due to the lower LOD (see next
 345 section), are not affecting the calculation of the recovery with the biosensor). These values
 346 indicate that components of purified extracts of fish flesh matrix are not interfering in the assay.
 347 The absence of matrix effects is another advantage over our previous work, where recovery
 348 values between 58 and 89% were obtained at different fish flesh matrix concentrations
 349 (Leonardo et al., 2020). This lower interference from the fish flesh matrix components in the
 350 current work is certainly due to the extract preparation protocol used, which included several
 351 purification steps and resulted in cleaner solutions.

352 Considering that a natural sample is analyzed at 5 g equivalents of fish flesh/mL and that no
 353 significant matrix effects are present, effective LOD and LOQ values of 0.001 and 0.005 µg/kg of
 354 CTX1B in fish flesh, respectively, are obtained. These values are lower than the FDA guidance
 355 level of 0.01 µg/kg. The decision limit ($CC\alpha$), which is the concentration at which the biosensor
 356 can conclude with a statistical certainty of $1 - \alpha$ (95 %) that the FDA guidance level has been
 357 truly exceeded (5% of false positive results), was 0.013 µg/kg. The detection capability ($CC\beta$),
 358 which is the concentration at which the biosensor is able to detect concentrations at the FDA
 359 guidance level with a statistical certainty of $1 - \beta$ (95 %) (5% of false negative results), was
 360 0.014 µg/kg. Therefore, the biosensor is appropriate as both a screening tool and a
 361 quantification method for positive samples.

362 Repeatability and reproducibility of the biosensor were evaluated by performing multiple
363 measurements on the same day (intraday precision) and different days (interday precision),
364 respectively (Gerssen, Van OIst, Mulder, & De Boer, 2010). Relative standard deviation (RSD)
365 values for measurements performed on the same day were 4.9, 3.1 and 4.4% (N=3) at 0.015,
366 0.010 and 0.005 µg/kg of CTX1B in fish flesh, respectively. RSD values for the measurements
367 performed on different days with different mAb-modified electrodes were 8.7, 7.6 and 18.8%
368 (N=5) at 0.015, 0.010 and 0.005 µg/kg of CTX1B in fish flesh, respectively. These values are
369 appropriate and show the high performance of the whole procedure including both
370 immunosensor preparation and electrochemical measurement.

371 **3.3. Analysis of natural samples**

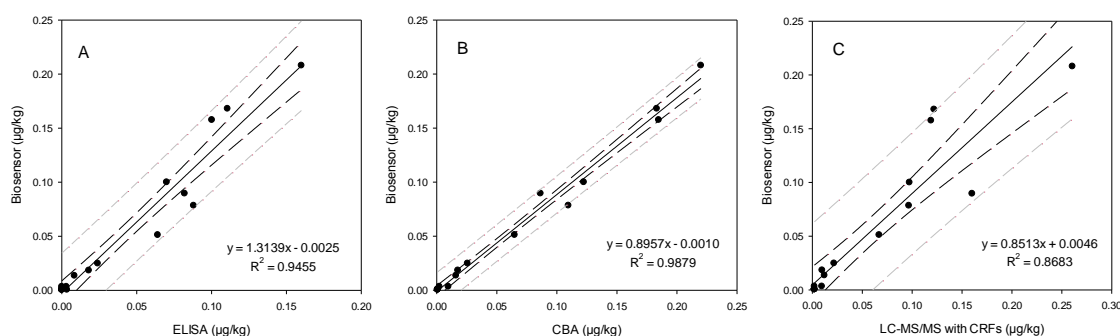
372 The MeOH eluate solutions from PSA cartridge columns of fish samples from Japan and Fiji were
373 analyzed with the immunosensor and results were provided in CTX1B equivalent contents using
374 the corresponding calibration curve. Results were compared to those obtained with the ELISAs,
375 the CBA and LC-MS/MS (Table 1).

376 The biosensor and the ELISAs are based on the same recognition principle. However, these two
377 strategies differ in different aspects. Whereas the biosensor uses two capture antibodies and
378 provides a composite response from the recognized Pacific CTXs (CTX1B, 54-deoxyCTX1B, CTX3C
379 and 51-hydroxyCTX3C), these ELISAs are performed with single antibodies and can discriminate
380 between congeners of the CTX1B and CTX3C series. The solid support where capture antibodies
381 are immobilized is also different: screen-printed carbon electrodes modified with MWCNTs in
382 the biosensor and microtiter plates in the ELISAs. Finally, whereas the biosensor uses
383 amperometry as a detection method, the ELISAs use colorimetry or fluorescence. Despite these
384 differences, when comparing the CTX contents between these two methods, the correlation is
385 excellent ($r=0.9455$; $P<0.001$) (Fig. 4A). Although the slope (1.3139) indicates that in general the
386 CTXs contents obtained with the biosensor are higher than those provided by the ELISAs, at an
387 individual level these higher contents are only appreciated in the most toxic samples. It is
388 necessary to mention that, as explained in the experimental section, fish samples were split into
389 three vials each, dried and shipped to the different laboratories participating in this work.
390 Therefore, shipment and resuspension could be a source of differences in the CTX contents.
391 Nevertheless, taking all the issues into account, the agreement is good enough.

392 When comparing the biosensor and the CBA, it is necessary to take into account that they have
393 different detection principles. Whereas the CBA provides a toxicological response due to the
394 effect of CTXs on the VGSCs of Neuro-2a cells, this biosensor responds to the structural
395 interaction between CTXs and the mAbs. Fish specimens 1 to 5, considered as negative by the
396 biosensor, were also negative by the CBA and LC-MS/MS (negative meaning no CTXs detected).
397 As can be observed in Fig. 4B, the correlation between the biosensor and the CBA is excellent
398 ($r=0.9879$; $P<0.001$) and the CTXs contents obtained with the biosensor are in general only
399 slightly lower than those provided by the CBA (slope of 0.8957). In this case, the same set of
400 extracts was used for the analysis with the biosensor and the CBA. It is interesting to note that
401 in our previous work (Leonardo et al., 2020), although the correlation was good, the magnetic
402 bead-based immunosensor provided much lower CTX1B equivalent contents than the CBA. In
403 that work, we hypothesized that the CBA could be detecting a higher number of CTXs or even
404 other compounds different from CTXs that also activate VGSCs (this could also happen in this
405 work, although in a lower extent). Additionally, the cross-reactivity factors (CRFs) for the
406 different CTX congeners in the immunosensor could not be necessarily the same as the toxic
407 equivalency factors (TEFs) in the CBA. The different origin of the positive samples, from La

408 Réunion and Maurice Islands (Indian Ocean) in the previous work and from Japan (Northwest
409 Pacific Ocean) in the current work, and consequently, the probably different CTX analogues
410 profiles may explain this issue. In fact, the mAbs used in this work were produced against
411 synthetic fragments of CTXs from the Pacific Ocean.

412 Regarding the comparison between the biosensor and LC-MS/MS, although both methods are
413 based on a structural recognition, the biosensor only detects the Pacific CTX congeners
414 recognized by the mAbs (which, in the MeOH eluate solutions used in this work, are CTX1B and
415 54-deoxyCTX1B). LC-MS/MS analysis revealed the presence of CTX1B, 52-*epi*-54-deoxyCTX1B
416 and/or 54-deoxyCTX1B in fish specimens 6 to 17 (in specimens 9 and 10 some of them at
417 contents below the LOQ, and in specimen 11 only trace amounts of 54-deoxyCTX1B). The
418 biosensor also provided positive results for fish specimens 6 to 17, with contents below the LOQ
419 for specimens 10 and 11. Additionally, LC-MS/MS analysis showed the presence of 2,3,51-
420 trihydroxyCTX3C and 2,3-dihydroxyCTX3C in specimens 7 and 8. In the evaluation of the
421 correlation between these two techniques, the application of CRFs of the individual CTX
422 congeners detected by LC-MS/MS is desired to calculate the sum of CTX1B equivalents. Although
423 CRFs may depend on the concentration of the capture mAbs and the immunosensing strategy
424 format, among other experimental conditions, a CRF of 1 was assumed for 54-deoxyCTX1B,
425 which is the CRF found in the fluorescent sandwich ELISA (Tsumuraya, Sato, Hirama, & Fujii,
426 2018). However, 52-*epi*-54-deoxyCTX1B is recognized in a much lower extent by the mAbs, and
427 2,3,51-trihydroxyCTX3C and 2,3-dihydroxyCTX3C are not supposed to be recognized. Therefore,
428 a CRF of 0 was applied for these three congeners identified by LC-MS/MS to compare the
429 quantifications of CTXs between the immunosensor and LC-MS/MS (in samples with high 52-*epi*-
430 54-deoxyCTX1B contents, a CRF for this CTX congener, even if low, may need to be applied). As
431 can be observed in Fig. 4C, the correlation is very good ($r=0.8683$; $P<0.001$) and the CTXs
432 contents obtained with the biosensor are in general only slightly lower than those provided by
433 LC-MS/MS analysis (slope of 0.8513). This good correlation suggests that shipment of dried fish
434 extracts and further resuspension did not affect CTXs stability.



435

436 **Figure 4.** Correlations between CTXs contents ($\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$) in the MeOH eluate solutions obtained
437 using the ELISAs and the biosensor (A), the CBA and the biosensor (B), and LC-MS/MS and the
438 biosensor (C). Black lines contain the 95% confidence band. Grey lines contain the 95%
439 prediction band.

440 The ACN eluate solutions of samples 7 and 8 were analyzed by all techniques. The biosensor
441 showed very low CTX1B equivalent contents (0.004 and 0.006 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$, respectively), which were
442 similar to those provided by the fluorescent ELISA for the CTX3C series (0.005 and 0.007 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$,
443 respectively). The CBA also showed low CTX-like toxicity (0.009 and 0.006 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$, respectively),
444 and LC-MS/MS analysis revealed the presence of small amounts of 2-hydroxyCTX3C (0.006 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$

445 and <LOQ, respectively). Regarding the strategies with the antibodies, the recognition of the left
446 wing of the CTX3C series by the mAb 10C9 is very specific. Therefore, the contents detected with
447 the biosensor and the ELISA are certainly not due to 2-hydroxyCTX3C. One possible explanation
448 is the presence of CTX3C or 51-hydroxyCTX3C at concentrations below the LOD of LC-MS/MS,
449 but detectable with the biosensor and the ELISA.

450 It is necessary to keep in mind that the biosensor uses a mixture of capture mAbs –the 3G8 mAb,
451 which binds to the left wing of CTX1B and 54-deoxyCTX1B, and the 10C9 mAb, which binds to
452 the left wing of CTX3C and 51-hydroxyCTX3C–, and a detector mAb –the 8H4 mAb, which binds
453 to the right wing of CTX1B, CTX3C, 54-deoxyCTX1B, and 51-hydroxyCTX3C–. Regardless the fact
454 that in the samples analyzed in this work CTX1B-type toxins were more abundant, this dual
455 detection capability can be interesting in the analysis of fish from regions where CTX3C-type
456 toxins co-occur with CTX1B-type toxins or are even more abundant (Oshiro, Tomikawa,
457 Kuniyoshi, Ishikawa, & Toyofuku, 2021b) or in the analysis of *Gambierdiscus* cells, where both
458 types of CTXs can also be present (Longo et al., 2019; Gaiani et al., 2020). The establishment of
459 CRFs and TEFs for all CTX congeners will certainly help to better understand the performance of
460 the biosensor and the CBA. This is a pending task, limited by the availability of standards of some
461 CTX congeners.

462 **3.4. Storage stability**

463 To investigate the possibility of shortening the protocol time, the storage stability of the
464 immobilized detector mAbs at room temperature, 4 and –20 °C for 17 days was evaluated.
465 Electrochemical signals rapidly decreased at room temperature, but they were constant at 4 and
466 –20 °C until the end of the experiment, demonstrating the stability of the functionalized
467 electrodes at these two temperatures. These results were used to predict the shelf life using the
468 Q Rule method (Anderson & Scott, 1991) according to the equation:

$$469 \text{ predicted stability (time)} = \text{real stability (time)} \times (Q10)^n$$

470 where n is the temperature change divided by 10, and the value of Q10 is typically set at 2, 3, or
471 4, which correspond to reasonable activation energies. Taking into account that the
472 functionalized electrodes were stable for at least 17 days at 4 and –20 °C, and considering a n
473 value of 2.4 and a conservative Q10 value of 2, the predicted stability at –20 °C is of at least 3
474 months. These results indicate that a pool of modified electrodes can be prepared on the same
475 day and stored until use, which reduces the assay time approximately from 3,5 to 2 h.

476 **3.5. Applicability**

477 In this work, we have shown that the developed biosensor is a very promising tool to assess the
478 presence of Pacific CTXs in fish. The effective LOD and LOQ values obtained with the
479 smartphone-controlled biosensor are below the FDA guidance level of 0.01 µg equivalents of
480 CTX1B/kg. Therefore, the biosensor can easily discriminate between samples above and below
481 this threshold and be used as both screening and quantification tool. If simple screening is
482 pursued, only one positive (e.g., at the FDA level) and one negative control need to be included
483 in the analysis (instead of the whole calibration curve), reducing time and cost. Although
484 confirmatory analysis of positive samples with instrumental analysis techniques is advised, the
485 high specificity of the antibodies together with the good reproducibility of the quantifications
486 provide reliability to the assessment. It is fair to mention that the antibodies used in this work
487 are highly specific for some Pacific CTXs and are not able to recognize other CTXs (or may
488 recognize some but with much lower cross-reactivity). This fact limits the geographical area of

489 applicability, but the biosensor is still appropriate for the analysis of samples from regions where
490 the Pacific CTXs recognized by the antibodies are the majority congeners. In Table 2, the
491 performance parameters of the different analytical techniques for detecting Pacific CTXs are
492 compared.

493 The CTXs extraction and purification protocol, in this work common to all analysis techniques, is
494 the limiting step since it requires time. Nonetheless, due to the storage stability of the biosensor,
495 the detection step can be completed in just 2 h, provided that the fish extracts are ready. In this
496 work, highly purified fish extracts were used, which certainly contributed to the good
497 performance of the techniques. Taking into account that matrix effects in the biosensor and the
498 ELISAs are surely different from those in the CBA or LC-MS/MS, there may be room for
499 simplification of the extraction protocol and consequent reduction in the overall analysis time.
500 This would further speed up the screening process. Therefore, research efforts should focus on
501 the optimization of CTXs extraction and purification protocols combined with the requirements
502 of each analysis technique.

503 The amount of CTXs calibrants and fish tissue and is also a key issue in the analysis of potentially
504 ciguateric fish as well as other matrixes. This will certainly depend on the sensitivity of the
505 analysis technique and the sample conditioning requirements. The biosensor requires only one
506 CTX standard (CTX1B) and at low concentrations and, in principle, small amounts of fish tissues
507 are needed. However, as previously stated, highly purified samples prepared following LC-
508 MS/MS requirements (and therefore starting from high amounts of fish tissues) have been used
509 in this work. Again, the validation of the biosensor with less purified samples would certainly
510 help to assess their applicability in cases where the amount of sample is limited.

511 The compact design of the tool, with a miniaturized potentiostat connected to a smartphone,
512 facilitates their use. Staff with basic biochemical/biotechnological skills can easily be trained for
513 biosensor operation. The biosensor can provide *in situ* results thanks to the portable design.
514 Since portable microtiter plate readers are commercially available, the ELISA can also provide *in*
515 *situ* results. However, as mentioned above, CTXs extraction and purification still need to be
516 optimized to exploit the biosensor and ELISA portability and enable analysis in the field.

517 The applicability of this biosensor can be expanded to other tissues, such as liver and gonads,
518 after proper validation, to better understand the presence of CTXs in fish where no trace
519 amounts have been found in flesh. Analysis of meal remnants and human body fluids with the
520 biosensor would also be highly interesting. Hence, this tool can help to better assess the risk of
521 ciguatera and improve prevention strategies.

522 **4. CONCLUSIONS**

523 An immunosensor for the detection of Pacific CTXs in fish samples, controlled by a smartphone,
524 was developed. The biosensor, with capture mAbs immobilized on MWCNT-modified carbon
525 electrodes, attained LOD and LOQ values that allow screening and quantification of Pacific CTXs
526 in fish at the FDA guidance level. The CTX1B equivalent contents in fish extracts provided by the
527 biosensor correlated and agreed very well with those obtained with ELISA, CBA and LC-MS/MS,
528 demonstrating the great suitability of this bioanalytical tool for the screening and quantification
529 of CTXs in fish from the Pacific Ocean. Production of antibodies capable of recognizing Caribbean
530 and Indian CTXs is highly desirable to increase the spectrum of detected CTX derivatives and
531 therefore the geographical area of applicability of the biosensor. Additionally, the biosensor
532 requires neither working with living material, which involves maintenance, nor sophisticated or

533 expensive instrumentation. Thanks to the recording of the electrochemical signal with a
534 smartphone-controlled potentiostat, the biosensor has the distinguishing advantages of being
535 compact, portable and easy to operate. In just a little over 2 h, Pacific CTX contents in fish
536 extracts can be quantified. However, CTXs extraction and purification, long and tedious steps
537 common to all analysis techniques, still need to be optimized to exploit the biosensor portability
538 and enable analysis in the field. Nevertheless, the outstanding performance makes this
539 biosensor suitable as an analytical tool in monitoring and research programs, where accurate
540 and precise CTX quantifications are pursued. The excellent correlation with the CBA guarantees
541 the biosensor reliability in safeguarding human health.

542

Figure 2. Protocol for the construction of the electrochemical immunosensor and the analysis of samples.

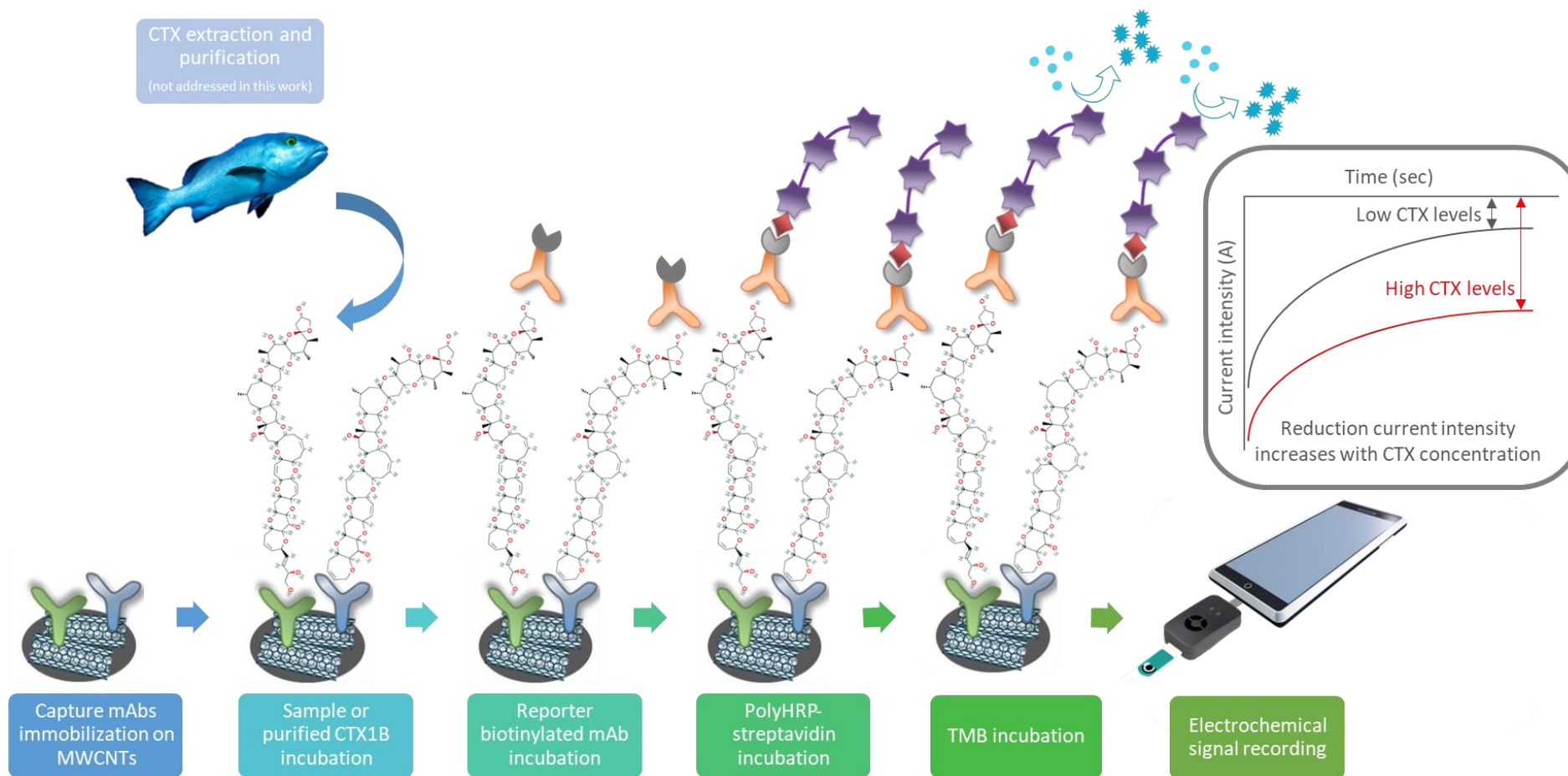


Table 1. CTXs contents ($\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$) in the MeOH eluate solutions obtained using the smartphone-controlled biosensor, the ELISAs, the CBA and LC-MS/MS.

Code	Species	Origin	Biosensor	Colorimetric ELISA (CTX1B)	Fluorescent ELISA (CTX1B)	Fluorescent ELISA (CTX3C)	CBA	LC-MS/MS						
								CTX1B	52- <i>epi</i> -54-deoxyCTX1B	54-deoxyCTX1B	2,3,51-trihydroxyCTX3C	2,3-dihydroxyCTX3C	Σ all (with CRFs)	
1	NIHS-FE20001	<i>L. bohar</i>	Okinawa	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	NIHS-FE20002	<i>L. bohar</i>	Okinawa	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	NIHS-FE20003	<i>L. monostigma</i>	Kagoshima	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	NIHS-FE20004	<i>V. louti</i>	Ehime	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	NIHS-FE20113	<i>G. javanicus</i>	Fiji	-	-	0.003	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	NIHS-FE20101	<i>L. bohar</i>	Okinawa	0.051	0.064	-	0.065	0.029	0.028	0.038	-	-	-	0.067
7	NIHS-FE20102	<i>L. bohar</i>	Wakayama	0.168	0.106	-	0.183	0.103	0.012	0.019	0.008	0.009	-	0.122
8	NIHS-FE20103	<i>L. bohar</i>	Wakayama	0.158	0.096	-	0.185	0.099	0.010	0.020	0.008	0.007	-	0.119
9	NIHS-FE20104	<i>L. bohar</i>	Okinawa	0.018	0.018	-	0.018	0.006	<LOQ	<LOQ	-	-	-	0.006
10	NIHS-FE20105	<i>L. bohar</i>	Okinawa	<LOQ	0.005	0.003	0.010	<LOQ	0.004	0.006	-	-	-	0.006
11	NIHS-FE20106	<i>L. bohar</i>	Okinawa	<LOQ	-	-	0.002	-	-	<LOD	-	-	-	<LOD
12	NIHS-FE20107	<i>L. bohar</i>	Okinawa	0.078	0.088	-	0.110	0.040	0.024	0.057	-	-	-	0.097
13	NIHS-FE20108	<i>L. monostigma</i>	Kagoshima	0.025	0.024	-	0.026	0.016	0.007	0.006	-	-	-	0.022
14	NIHS-FE20109	<i>L. monostigma</i>	Okinawa	0.014	0.009	0.008	0.016	0.007	0.004	0.005	-	-	-	0.012
15	NIHS-FE20110	<i>L. monostigma</i>	Okinawa	0.100	0.070	-	0.122	0.089	0.013	0.009	-	-	-	0.098
16	NIHS-FE20111	<i>V. louti</i>	Okinawa	0.208	0.160	-	0.220	0.105	0.054	0.156	-	-	-	0.261
17	NIHS-FE20112	<i>V. albimarginata</i>	Okinawa	0.090	0.082	-	0.086	0.067	0.087	0.093	-	-	-	0.160

-: not detected (no signal)

Biosensor: LOD=0.001 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$, LOQ=0.005 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$

Colorimetric ELISA: LOD=0.0004 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$, LOQ=0.0012 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$

Fluorescent ELISA: LOD=0.00004 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$, LOQ=0.0001 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$

CBA: LOQ=0.001 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$

LC-MS/MS: LOD=0.002 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$, LOQ=0.005 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$

Table 2. Comparison of the performance parameters of the different analytical techniques for detecting Pacific CTXs.

Technique	Calibrant/sample amount	Sensitivity	Detection mechanism*	Measurement format	Training requirement	Cost	Potentially portable	Assay time [#]	Used in this work
MBA	High	Low	Toxicity	Serial	Low	Low	No	Long	No
RBA	Low	Medium	Toxicity	Parallel	Medium	Medium	No	Medium	No
CBA	Low	High	Toxicity	Parallel	High	Medium	No	Long	Yes
ELISA	Low	High	Immunochemistry	Parallel	Low	Medium	Yes	Medium	Yes
Biosensor	Low	High	Immunochemistry	Serial	Low	Medium	Yes	Short	Yes
LC-MS/MS	Medium	High	Mass/Structure	Serial	High	High	No	Medium	Yes

[#]CTXs extraction and purification not included.

Declaration of competing interest

There are no conflicts of interest to declare.

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Masahiro Hiramasa: Investigation; Resources; Writing - review & editing.

Jorge Diogène: Funding acquisition; Investigation; Project administration; Resources; Writing - review & editing.

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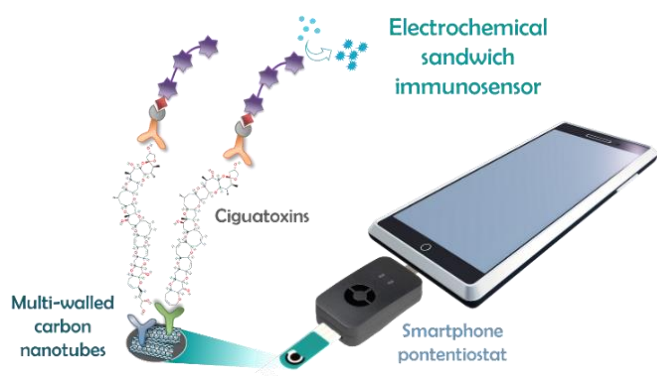
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Graphical abstract



Supplementary information

Figure S1. Map with the fish collection sites.



Table S1. Weight, length and origin of the fishes.

	Code	Species	Origin	Weight (g)	Length (mm)	Origin
1	NIHS-FE20001	<i>L. bohar</i>	Okinawa	-	-	fisher
2	NIHS-FE20002	<i>L. bohar</i>	Okinawa	404	208	fisher
3	NIHS-FE20003	<i>L. monostigma</i>	Kagoshima	-	330	fisher
4	NIHS-FE20004	<i>V. louti</i>	Ehime	4,800	5,500	disapproved
5	NIHS-FE20113	<i>G. javanicus</i>	Fiji	1,845	855	fisher
6	NIHS-FE20101	<i>L. bohar</i>	Okinawa	-	-	fisher
7	NIHS-FE20102	<i>L. bohar</i>	Wakayama	12,000	-	disapproved
8	NIHS-FE20103	<i>L. bohar</i>	Wakayama	11,000	-	disapproved
9	NIHS-FE20104	<i>L. bohar</i>	Okinawa	2,000	390	fisher
10	NIHS-FE20105	<i>L. bohar</i>	Okinawa	477	250	fisher
11	NIHS-FE20106	<i>L. bohar</i>	Okinawa	1,028	294	fisher
12	NIHS-FE20107	<i>L. bohar</i>	Okinawa	-	-	fisher
13	NIHS-FE20108	<i>L. monostigma</i>	Kagoshima	-	-	fisher
14	NIHS-FE20109	<i>L. monostigma</i>	Okinawa	-	-	fisher
15	NIHS-FE20110	<i>L. monostigma</i>	Okinawa	-	-	fisher
16	NIHS-FE20111	<i>V. louti</i>	Okinawa	3,040	496	fisher
17	NIHS-FE20112	<i>V. albimarginata</i>	Okinawa	-	-	fisher