

Radiological risk assessment and characteristics of ^{210}Po in selected water sources in Quang Nam and Da Nang, Vietnam

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Received 05 June 2023; Received in revised form 27 August 2023; Accepted 03 October 2023

ABSTRACT

^{210}Po , one of the harmful natural isotopes with a long enough half-life, plays a significant role in environmental processes. 48 samples, including groundwater (dug wells, thermal water, and drill wells) and surface water (lakes, rivers, and streams) in the Da Nang - Quang Nam region of Vietnam were analyzed by an alpha spectrometer. Relatively low activities of ^{210}Po have been observed, whose mean values ranged from 0.15 to 4.58 and 1.34 mBq.L^{-1} . There is no significant variation in ^{210}Po activities between groundwater and surface water groups. The average ^{210}Po activity of those groups is 1.28 and 1.40 mBq.L^{-1} , respectively. The geological conditions of the study area, neutral pH values, and predominant oxidizing conditions supported the low ^{210}Po activities in the selected water sources. Average annual effective doses for adults, children, and infants due to the consumption of water containing ^{210}Po were found to be 1.15, 1.21, and 2.94 $\mu\text{Sv.y}^{-1}$, respectively.

Keywords: ^{210}Po , Radiological risk assessment, drinking water, Quang Nam, Da Nang.

1. Introduction

Fresh water is an essential and necessary resource for the human diet, daily use, and productive activities (Sherif and Sturchio, 2018; Zhong et al, 2020). The occurrence of natural radioisotopes and their decay products in water is a natural phenomenon (Sekudewicz and Gąsiorowski, 2019). However, the high concentrations of natural radioisotopes can pose a significant risk to aquatic organisms (Sekudewicz and Gąsiorowski, 2019).

Polonium- 210 (^{210}Po) is a natural radioactive isotope with a half-life of 138.4 days. It is a progeny of ^{238}U and belongs to group 1, so it

is considered a carcinogen (IARC, International Agency for Research on Cancer, 2001). Several epidemiological studies have considered ^{210}Po in drinking water as a possible risk factor for cancer and other diseases in small doses (Seiler, 2016; Harrison et al., 2007).

The ^{210}Po occurrence in drinking water is widespread because of the hydrological cycle leading to its distribution in surface and groundwater environments (Carvalho et al., 2017). As a reactive element, ^{210}Po is generally considered to be adsorbed on solid surfaces in aquifer systems because it is easily removed from water by co-precipitation with Fe hydroxide, Mn oxide, colloids, and sulfides (Seiler et al., 2011; Bacon et al., 1980). For surface water, the predominant oxidizing

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conditions, heavy rainfall, the deposition of particles, and the volatility of ^{210}Po are the causes leading to the removal or dilution of ^{210}Po from the water column. That is why ^{210}Po is rarely found in near-surface drinking water sources over $\sim 40 \text{ mBq.L}^{-1}$ (Seiler, 2011). However, several previous studies reported the ^{210}Po activity to be more than 10000 mBq.L^{-1} (Burnett et al., 1987; Mullin, 1982; Lehto et al., 1999; Salonen, 1988; Seiler, 2011; Muikku et al., 2011; Seiler, 2016). Meanwhile, 100 mBq.L^{-1} is the guideline level for drinking water issued by the WHO (World Health Organization, 2011), and 200 mBq.L^{-1} is Canada's maximum acceptable concentration (MAC) for ^{210}Po (Health Canada, 2007). In addition, the ^{210}Po activity in water was concerned with radiological risk when it exceeded 41 mBq.L^{-1} (US Environmental Protection Agency, 2000). As an isotope emitting alpha particles, ^{210}Po is very dangerous when it enters the human body through water consumption. So, the radiological hazard assessment remains of significant concern.

Most worldwide investigations of the ^{210}Po behavior in groundwater or surface waters suggest that the controlling factor of its mobilization may be the presence of parent radioisotopes, aquifer lithology, and environmental parameters such as pH, oxidation-reduction conditions, TDS, and temperature (Zhong et al., 2020; Dickson and Herczeg, 1992; Burnett et al., 1987; Seiler, 2011; Ruberu, 2007; Outola, 2008; Ram, 2019). However, there are exceptions to previous reports, such as Upchurch et al. (1991), who concluded that there was little evidence that the reduction/oxidation reactions of ^{210}Po play a role in the mobilization of ^{210}Po in groundwater (Upchurch et al., 1991). Likewise, Seiler et al. (2011 and 2016) suggested that the pH factor and the presence of parent isotopes such as ^{226}Ra and ^{222}Rn do not seem to be essential factors in mobilizing the ^{210}Po (Seiler, 2011 and 2016). It is recognized that the ^{210}Po

behavior in freshwater environments is relatively complex. A small change in environmental conditions could lead to a change in the ^{210}Po presence. Different regions have characteristics that lead to variations in the measured value of ^{210}Po activities. About this, investigating ^{210}Po in any given area provides insights and contributes to clarifying the behavior of ^{210}Po in aquatic environments. Environmental issues in Vietnam, especially the aquatic environment have been of interest to date (Nguyen et al., 2018; Quyen et al., 1995; Thi Minh Hanh et al., 2011). However, determining radionuclide contamination in the aquatic environment is still limited. The Quang Nam and Da Nang provinces are located in central Vietnam. Population growth and rapid economic development have increased the demand for groundwater and drinking water. Since this area is characterized by tectonic activity with many faults (Tran et al., 2008, 2009, 2014), the faults facilitate ^{222}Rn dispersion into the surrounding environment (Lombardi et al., 2010), and the fault system also created the aquifer host formation. That water source in the aquifer hosts dissolves ^{222}Rn , the parent of ^{210}Po . Carvalho, (2017) suggested that precursor parent decay (^{222}Rn) is the leading cause of the mobilization of ^{210}Po in water sources. In addition, uranium mines surround the study area (Cao et al., 2005; Lien et al., 2011; Nguyen, 2019), which may lead to an increase in ^{210}Po pollution on/in the surface and groundwater of this area. Therefore, the primary purposes of this study are to conduct a radiological hazard assessment of ^{210}Po due to water consumption and to provide the ^{210}Po characteristics of selected water sources in Quang Nam and Da Nang, Vietnam.

2. Geology, sampling, and analytical methods

2.1. Geological setting

The topography of the study area is characterized by hills, plateaus, medium-low mountains, and plains with lower elevations

from west to east due to the substantial uplift of the Kon Tum - Da Lat massif and deep subsidence of the continental shelf. Da Nang and Quang Nam provinces are located in the central part of central Vietnam, where the Cu-De, Po-Ko, and Tra Bong faults occurred. The fault system in the study area includes sub-longitudes, longitudes of latitude northeast-southwest, and northwest-southeast. Geological formations from the ancient to the quaternary are present in most of Quang Nam - Da Nang. In the study area, there is the appearance of a series of intrusive

metamorphic formations (Fig. 1). However, these formations are determined to be quite water-poor. A significant water storage formation is the Holocene diluvial formation, which occurs as deltas consisting of sand, mud, and gravel. The Pleistocene sedimentary aquifer predominates in the study regions, with the main components including fine-grained sand and quartz, which are usually known for their low radionuclide concentrations. Finally, the Neogene sedimentary formation includes siltstone, sandstone, and organic materials.

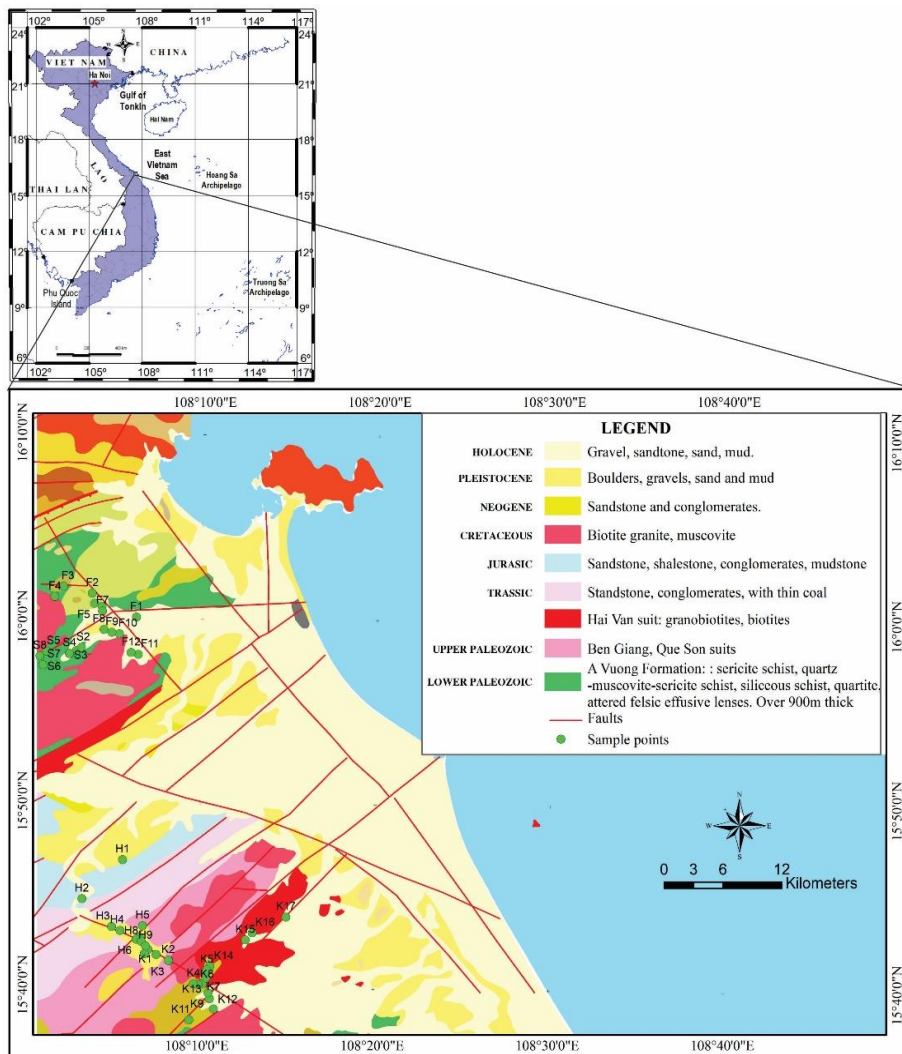


Figure 1. The geological map and sampling points of the study area

2.2. Sampling

The selected water samples represent typical locations, people use for drinking, living, and production. The sampling points are distributed within four lines of faults (Fig. 1). Groundwater (dug wells, drill wells, and thermal water) samples are collected in resident and tourist areas, and surface water (lakes, rivers, and streams) is taken next to densely populated areas, which could be a supplementary source for groundwater. 48 samples, including dug wells, drill wells, thermal water, lake, river, and spring water sources, are collected into cans of 20 liters. Acidification was carried out immediately after sampling to avoid the influence of microorganisms and the adsorption of ^{210}Po on the walls of cans. In situ, parameters such as temperature, pH, Eh, TDS, and EC of the studied water sources were measured during sampling with Hanna models HI8314 and HI2003-02.

2.3. Methods

^{210}Po determination in study samples:

Due to the complex chemical properties of polonium (Thakur et al., 2020; Ram et al., 2019), the ^{210}Po determination in water samples requires chemical separation. Alpha spectroscopy has determined ^{210}Po activity in the measured samples (IAEA, 2009).

In the laboratory, 5 liters of each water sample were prepared following the preparation procedures of IAEA (2009) and Van-Hao et al. (2021, 2022) (IAEA, 2009; Van-Hao et al., 2021, 2022). A 50 mBq ^{209}Po tracer was added to the water samples initially. The ^{210}Po separation process was initiated by co-precipitation with MnO_2 by the addition of a mixture of MnCl_2 and KMnO_4 under pH conditions of ~ 9 (IAEA, 2009; Van-Hao et al., 2021, 2022). The obtained precipitation was dissolved in 9M HCl acid solution and evaporated to dryness at $<90^\circ\text{C}$. The sample was then dissolved in HCl

(0.5M), and 0.5 g of ascorbic acid was added to reduce Fe^{3+} to Fe^{2+} (IAEA, 2009; Van-Hao et al., 2021). The ^{209}Po and ^{210}Po were spontaneously deposited on a silver dish from the solution after ~ 4 h at 80°C . The ^{210}Po activity in the studied samples was determined by alpha spectroscopy (ORTEC ALPHA-DUOM1 - high-resolution PIPS detector with 450 mm^2 in area). The recovery rate of the ^{209}Po tracer was up to 90%. The time of measurement of each study sample was chosen to get less 5% of uncertainty of the counting rate at the ^{210}Po and ^{209}Po peaks.

Annual effective dose (AED):

The AED due to consumption of water containing ^{210}Po was calculated according to formula (1) (USA - EPA, 1998).

$$\text{AED}_{210\text{Po}} = A_{210\text{Po}} \times \text{DCC} \times \text{CR} \quad (1)$$

- $\text{AED}_{210\text{Po}}$: is the annual effective dose ($\mu\text{Sv.y}^{-1}$),

- $A_{210\text{Po}}$ is the ^{210}Po active concentration (Bq.L^{-1}),

- D is the dose conversion coefficient (Sv.Bq^{-1}) for adults, children, and infants of 1.2×10^{-6} , 2.6×10^{-6} , and 8.8×10^{-6} Sv.Bq^{-1} , respectively (UNSCEAR, 2000).

- CR is the annual consumption rate (L.y^{-1}) for adults, children, and infants is 730, 350, and 250 L, respectively (ICRP, 2008).

3. Results and discussions

3.1. Results

The parameters (pH, EC, TDS, Eh, and depth) of the selected water sources are shown in Table 1. Depths from surface reach to aquifer are recorded for each groundwater type up to 70 m. The pH value is expressed from 5.40 to 9.90, 7.19 on average. For temperature, except for the thermal water samples (from 38 to 55°C), the rest of the selected water has a temperature range from 23 to 32°C . The EC ($\mu\text{S/cm}$), TSD (ppm), and Eh (mV) ranged from 26 to 901 $\mu\text{S/cm}$, from 13 to 450, and from -254 to 182, with means of 159.4 $\mu\text{S/cm}$, 80.9 ppm, and 66.2 mV, respectively.

Table 1. ²¹⁰Po activity, environmental parameters in study water sources and annual effective dose

| Sample code | Water type | Coordinates | | Depth (m) | pH | EC (µS/cm) | TSD (ppm) | T0 (°C) | Eh (mV) | Activity concentration of ²¹⁰ Po (mBq.L ⁻¹) | Annual effective dose (µSv.y ⁻¹) | | | |
|----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|------|------------|-----------|---------|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------|--------|------|
| | | X | Y | | | | | | | | Infants | Children | Adults | |
| F3 | Groundwater (Dig wells) | 108.03396 | 16.02786 | 30 | 7.1 | 26 | 14 | 29.5 | 42 | 0.74 | 1.62 | 0.67 | 0.64 | |
| F10 | | 108.08775 | 15.98568 | 10 | 6.3 | 34 | 17 | 26.5 | 182 | 1.0 | 2.21 | 0.91 | 0.87 | |
| S1 | | 108.04686 | 15.96986 | 10 | 6.7 | 69 | 36 | 27.5 | 154 | 0.67 | 1.46 | 0.61 | 0.58 | |
| S2 | | 108.05161 | 15.97275 | 10 | 6.3 | 85 | 42 | 28.3 | 116 | 0.33 | 0.73 | 0.3 | 0.29 | |
| H7 | | 108.11053 | 15.71124 | 9 | 6.3 | 110 | 55 | 27.7 | 146 | 0.71 | 1.56 | 0.64 | 0.61 | |
| K7 | | 108.17124 | 15.66977 | 9 | 6.6 | 333 | 164 | 28.8 | 161 | 0.78 | 1.71 | 0.71 | 0.67 | |
| K14 | | 108.17798 | 15.68576 | 10 | 6.4 | 151 | 75 | 29.3 | 125 | 3.87 | 8.52 | 3.52 | 3.34 | |
| F5 | | 108.06356 | 16.01283 | 6 | 5.55 | 60 | 30 | 30.4 | 130 | 0.42 | 0.92 | 0.38 | 0.36 | |
| F6 | Groundwater (Drill wells) | 108.07089 | 16.01028 | 25 | 5.4 | 162 | 81 | 28.3 | 182 | 0.65 | 1.43 | 0.59 | 0.56 | |
| F8 | | 108.07308 | 15.98939 | 70 | 6.7 | 162 | 81 | 28.1 | 75 | 0.9 | 1.98 | 0.82 | 0.78 | |
| H3 | | 108.08393 | 15.72051 | 55 | 7.7 | 640 | 317 | 28.5 | -40 | 0.68 | 1.5 | 0.62 | 0.59 | |
| H4 | | 108.09191 | 15.71724 | 50 | 6.1 | 207 | 103 | 27.4 | 153 | 0.6 | 1.32 | 0.55 | 0.52 | |
| H6 | | 108.10761 | 15.70944 | 70 | 6.5 | 208 | 104 | 27.5 | 150 | 0.51 | 1.11 | 0.46 | 0.44 | |
| H8 | | 108.11242 | 15.70764 | 60 | 9.5 | 400 | 200 | 29 | -182 | 1.04 | 2.28 | 0.94 | 0.9 | |
| H10 | | 108.11886 | 15.70039 | 18 | 6.1 | 235 | 119 | 30 | 37 | 1.84 | 4.05 | 1.68 | 1.59 | |
| H11 | | 108.11550 | 15.69644 | 28 | 6.0 | 83 | 41 | 27.6 | 87 | 0.88 | 1.94 | 0.8 | 0.76 | |
| K1 | | 108.12681 | 15.69578 | 18 | 6.1 | 112 | 56 | 28.6 | 135 | 1.5 | 3.3 | 1.36 | 1.3 | |
| K3 | | 108.13883 | 15.69047 | 7 | 6.9 | 166 | 87 | 29 | 46 | 2.03 | 4.47 | 1.85 | 1.75 | |
| K6 | | 108.17400 | 15.67975 | 16 | 5.8 | 66 | 33 | 30.2 | 166 | 0.7 | 1.55 | 0.64 | 0.61 | |
| K10 | | 108.17803 | 15.65656 | 50 | 6.3 | 214 | 102 | 32 | 86 | 2.27 | 4.99 | 2.07 | 1.96 | |
| K12 | | 108.18200 | 15.64731 | 55 | 7.3 | 275 | 137 | 28.8 | 79 | 4.1 | 9.02 | 3.73 | 3.54 | |
| K13 | | 108.17443 | 15.67519 | 15 | 6.2 | 143 | 73 | 29.8 | 142 | 1.41 | 3.1 | 1.28 | 1.22 | |
| K17 | | 108.24970 | 15.73125 | 30 | 8.2 | 33 | 16 | 30 | 44 | 2.99 | 6.57 | 2.72 | 2.58 | |
| F11 | | Groundwater (Thermal water) | 108.10599 | 15.96721 | 50 | 9.2 | 638 | 318 | 41 | -202 | 1.54 | 3.39 | 1.4 | 1.33 |
| S5 | | | 108.01853 | 15.96889 | 65 | 8.4 | 901 | 450 | 38 | -198 | 1.1 | 2.42 | 1.0 | 0.95 |
| H9 | 108.11664 | | 15.70350 | NA | 9.4 | 481 | 237 | 55 | -251 | 0.6 | 1.31 | 0.54 | 0.51 | |
| K9 | 108.17661 | | 15.66172 | NA | 9.9 | 474 | 260 | 48 | -254 | 0.78 | 1.71 | 0.71 | 0.67 | |
| F1 | Surface (Lakes) | 108.10370 | 16.00098 | 0 | 7.6 | 66 | 71 | 27.8 | 17 | 1.41 | 3.11 | 1.29 | 1.22 | |
| F12 | | 108.09915 | 15.96875 | 0 | 7.7 | 29 | 14 | 25 | 52 | 2.16 | 4.75 | 1.97 | 1.87 | |
| H1 | | 108.09356 | 15.78131 | 0 | 7.5 | 39 | 20 | 26.8 | 106 | 1.33 | 2.92 | 1.21 | 1.15 | |
| H2 | | 108.05540 | 15.74542 | 0 | 7.6 | 48 | 25 | 25.2 | 110 | 1.56 | 3.42 | 1.42 | 1.34 | |
| H5 | | 108.11354 | 15.72177 | 0 | 7.7 | 86 | 44 | 30.5 | 102 | 0.7 | 1.54 | 0.64 | 0.61 | |
| K5 | | 108.17522 | 15.68253 | 0 | 6.8 | 59 | 30 | 28.4 | 36 | 0.96 | 2.12 | 0.87 | 0.83 | |
| K8 | | 108.16725 | 15.66900 | 0 | 8.9 | 74 | 38 | 31.9 | 72 | 0.86 | 1.88 | 0.78 | 0.74 | |
| K11 | | 108.15870 | 15.63697 | 0 | 7.2 | 62 | 31 | 27.7 | 101 | 0.81 | 1.79 | 0.74 | 0.7 | |
| K16 | | 108.21789 | 15.71654 | 0 | 7.5 | 60 | 30 | 29 | 76 | 0.88 | 1.93 | 0.8 | 0.76 | |
| F9 | | Surface (Rivers) | 108.08053 | 15.98678 | 0 | 7.4 | 44 | 23 | 27.5 | 92 | 1.2 | 2.63 | 1.09 | 1.03 |
| S3 | 108.04039 | | 15.96717 | 0 | 7.6 | 42 | 21 | 29.3 | 124 | 1.46 | 3.21 | 1.33 | 1.26 | |
| F2 | Surface (Streams) | 108.06130 | 16.02202 | 0 | 7 | 76 | 38 | 29.3 | 58 | 0.48 | 1.05 | 0.44 | 0.41 | |
| F4 | | 108.02574 | 16.01850 | 0 | 7 | 76 | 38 | 29.3 | 58 | 4.58 | 10.1 | 4.17 | 3.96 | |
| F7 | | 108.07128 | 16.00594 | 0 | 7.2 | 73 | 36 | 30.2 | 109 | 0.15 | 0.32 | 0.13 | 0.13 | |
| S4 | | 108.04042 | 15.96736 | 0 | 7.1 | 26 | 13 | 30 | 103 | 1.25 | 2.74 | 1.13 | 1.08 | |
| S6 | | 108.01514 | 15.95656 | 0 | 7.6 | 38 | 19 | 23 | 85 | 1.47 | 3.24 | 1.34 | 1.27 | |
| S7 | | 108.02565 | 15.95708 | 0 | 7.4 | 29 | 14 | 26 | 103 | 2.75 | 6.05 | 2.5 | 2.38 | |
| S8 | | 108.01217 | 15.96464 | 0 | 8 | 53 | 27 | 25 | 99 | 2.84 | 6.26 | 2.59 | 2.46 | |
| K2 | | 108.13825 | 15.69086 | 0 | 7.7 | 35 | 18 | 29.6 | 125 | 0.8 | 1.76 | 0.73 | 0.69 | |
| K4 | | 108.16251 | 15.66986 | 0 | 7.6 | 33 | 17 | 29 | 90 | 0.95 | 2.1 | 0.87 | 0.82 | |
| K15 | | 108.21140 | 15.71001 | 0 | 6.2 | 136 | 68 | 27.6 | 150 | 0.84 | 1.84 | 0.76 | 0.72 | |
| Average | | | | 16 | 7.19 | 159.4 | 80.9 | 29.8 | 66.2 | 1.33 | 2.94 | 1.21 | 1.15 | |
| Min | | | | 0 | 5.4 | 26 | 13 | 23 | -254 | 0.15 | 0.32 | 0.13 | 0.13 | |
| Max | | | | 70 | 9.9 | 901 | 450 | 55 | 182 | 4.58 | 10.1 | 4.17 | 3.96 | |

Table 1 shows the ²¹⁰Po activities in different types of water sources. The ²¹⁰Po activities range from 0.15 to 4.58, with a mean value of 1.34 mBq.L⁻¹. There was an insignificant difference in ²¹⁰Po concentration in dug wells, drill wells, thermal water, lakes, rivers, and stream water sources, with mean values of 1.06, 1.47,

1.01, 1.17, 1.33, and 4.34 mBq.L⁻¹, respectively. Based on the origin of water sources, the samples were divided into two main groups: groundwater (0.33–4.1 mBq.L⁻¹) and surface water (0.15–4.58 mBq.L⁻¹). The similarity of the ²¹⁰Po level was also recorded with mean values of 1.28 and 1.40 mBq.L⁻¹, respectively (Fig. 2).

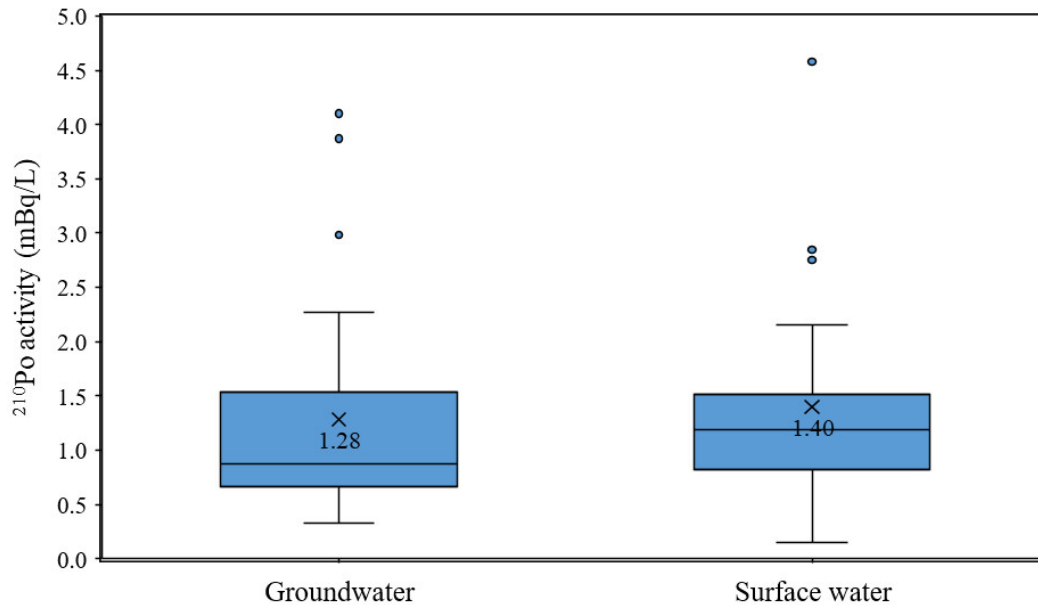


Figure 2. Distribution of ^{210}Po in surface and groundwater sources in the study area

3.1. Discussions

The ^{210}Po values in the studied water sources were relatively low compared to other sources worldwide (Table 2). For example, ^{210}Po activities in drinking water in the USA were over 555 mBq.L^{-1} due to contamination with phosphate, with a maximum level of up to 14400 mBq.L^{-1} (Burnett et al., 1987). Investigations in Finland have identified a maximum observed value of 14800 mBq.L^{-1} in several contaminated wells in granite bedrock (Muikku et al., 2011). Maximum levels exceeding 7000 mBq.L^{-1} have been found in groundwater (Vaaramaa et al., 2003) or ^{210}Po in some mineral springs up to 398 mBq.L^{-1} in Brazil (Neto et al., 1998), up to 947 mBq.L^{-1} in groundwater in Sweden (Isam Salih et al., 2002). In contrast, low ^{210}Po activity was also reported for water sources from rivers, lakes, and streams, with values typically of $0.5\text{--}10 \text{ mBq.L}^{-1}$ in several countries such as Tajikistan, the USA, India, Poland, Malaysia, Brazil, and Croatia (Table 2). Table 2 showed that ^{210}Po activities in the present

study area were higher than most selected countries, and only a few water sources were a little lower than the present study values (Benoit et al., 1990; Shaheed et al., 1997). Regarding the groundwater sources in Vietnam, the study area also observed quite similar low ^{210}Po activity with thermal water sources (groundwater) of Hai Phong, Quang Ninh, Tuyen Quang, Phu Tho, Hoa Binh, Ninh Binh, and Son La provinces (Van-Hao et al., 2022). Therein, the ^{210}Po activity was recorded as lower than in Hai Phong, Quang Ninh, Tuyen Quang, Ninh Binh, and Son La provinces, but it was higher than that in Phu Tho and Hoa Binh provinces (Van-Hao et al., 2022). Those provinces were reported to have carbonate aquifer formations, which were well-known for the low potential of radionuclides (Nguyen et al., 2021; Van-Hao et al., 2022). The variation in the content of ^{210}Po among different regions in the world further supports the view that different environments lead to a change in the mobilization-absorption capacity of ^{210}Po in water.

Table 2. Worldwide ^{210}Po activities in surface and groundwater in different locations in the world

| County | Water type | ^{210}Po Range (mBq.L ⁻¹) | Average (mBq/L) | Source |
|---------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Australia | Groundwater | 0–114 | 24.2 | Walsh et al., 2014 |
| China | | 0.24–6.96 | 2.23 | Zhong et al., 2020 |
| E. Brasil | | <55–459 | 161 | Valentim., 1997 |
| Finland | | – | 14800 | Muikku et al., 2011 |
| Finland | | 3900–13,200 | 7400 | Lehto et al., 1999 |
| Finland | | 160–7020 | 1740 | Vaaramaa et al., 2003 |
| Sweden | | <5–947 | 11 | Isam Salih et al., 2002 |
| USA | | 1–6590 | | Seiler, 2011 |
| USA | | ? –14400 | | Burnett et al., 1987 |
| USA | | <0.1–16,600 | 4.57 | Seiler., 2016 |
| Republic of Palau | Lake | 1–133 | | Kim et al., 2005 |
| Crimean | | 0.5–229 | | Mirzoeva et al., 2020 |
| Tajikistan | | 1–5.6 | | Skippered., 2013 |
| USA | | | 1.6 | Talbot et al., 1984 |
| USA | River | | 1.3 | Benoit et al., 1990 |
| India | | 0.77–1.27 | 1.1 | Shaheed et al., 1997 |
| India | | 0.86–4.49 | 2.67 | Kavitha et al., 2017 |
| Poland | | 2.15–6.03 | | Skwarzec et al., 2007 |
| Poland | | 1.46–2.39 | | Skwarzec et al., 2008 |
| Malaysia | | 0.63–14.98 | | Ahmed et al., 2018 |
| Brazil | Spring | 3–398 | | Neto et al., 1998 |
| Brazil | | 6–1378 | | Nieri et al., 1996 |
| Croatia | | 0.6–3 | | Rožmarić et al., 2012 |
| Hai Phong - Vietnam | Groundwater | | 1.79 | Van-Hao et al., 2022 |
| Quang Ninh- Vietnam | | | 2.83 | |
| Phu Tho - Vietnam | | | 1.19 | |
| Tuyen Quang - Vietnam | | | 1.39 | |
| Ninh Binh - Vietnam | | | 8.26 | |
| Hoa Binh - Vietnam | | | 1.01 | |
| Son La - Vietnam | | | 3.73 | |
| Quang Nam and Da Nang - Vietnam | Groundwater | | 1.28 | This study |
| | Surface water | | 1.34 | |

The ^{210}Po activities in groundwater range from 0.33 to 4.1 mBq.L⁻¹ and surface water from 0.15 to 4.58 mBq.L⁻¹. These activities have been observed in previous studies because the radionuclides in groundwater are often much higher than in surface water, as it passes through soil and rock formations by dissolving many compounds and radionuclides host minerals (Akar et al., 2012; Srinivasa et al., 2018). The hydrogeological characteristics of aquifers in this area are identified as sedimentary and weathered quaternary formations, those formations of Pleistocene with the main components including fine-grained sand and quartz, which are usually known for low radionuclide

concentration and little potential for supporting radionuclides into the water environment (Taylor et al., 2002). On the other hand, ^{210}Po is a reactive element and strongly binds to sediments, so it is easily removed from water through adsorption on solid surfaces in aquifer systems (Seiler et al., 2011; Bacon et al., 1980). Therefore, its activity is usually less than 5 mBq.L⁻¹ reported in a previous study (Persson, 2014). Some studies found a high concentration of ^{210}Po in water under reducing conditions and pH<5 (LaRock et al., 1996; Seiler, 2016; Seiler., 2011). Accordingly, pH and oxidation-reduction conditions can be important factors affecting the mobilization of

^{210}Po in the study water environment. This study's predominant oxidizing conditions and neutral pH (5.4–9.9) could be responsible for the low ^{210}Po content in the study water sources (Table 1). The finding was approved by Seiler, (2011) when comparing data from different studies (Seiler, 2011). The mentions may explain the low activity level of ^{210}Po in this study. Interestingly, despite the existence of uranium mines in the surrounding area, it can be concluded that they do not significantly affect the ^{210}Po level in the area.

4. Annual effective dose

The AEDs for drinking water containing ^{210}Po in this study are presented in Table 1. Overall, the mean doses for adults (0.126–3.96 $\mu\text{Sv.y}^{-1}$), children (0.134–4.17 $\mu\text{Sv.y}^{-1}$) and Infants (0.134–4.17 $\mu\text{Sv.y}^{-1}$) are all below the allowable limit of 100 $\mu\text{Sv.y}^{-1}$ (WHO, 20011), with mean values of 1.15, 1.21, and 2.94 $\mu\text{Sv.y}^{-1}$, respectively. This result shows that consumption of water containing ^{210}Po isotope is relatively safe for residents in the study area.

5. Conclusions

^{210}Po activities have been determined in 48 water sources in Quang Nam and Da Nang, Vietnam (including groundwater (dug wells, thermal water, and drills wells) and surface water (lakes, rivers, and streams)). The ^{210}Po activities in study samples ranged from 0.15 to 4.58, with an average value of 1.34 mBq.L^{-1} . There was no significant difference in ^{210}Po activities in different water sources and in groundwater and surface water sources, with mean values of 1.28 and 1.40 mBq.L^{-1} , respectively. The low ^{210}Po activity in different types of water sources was likely related to the studied area's geological conditions, neutral pH level, and predominant oxidizing conditions that could not supply ^{210}Po to surface and groundwater sources. The low ^{210}Po content in this study was the negligible influence of uranium

deposits in the region on the distribution of ^{210}Po in different water types.

The ^{210}Po activities in all water samples did not exceed the reference value guideline of 100 mBq.L^{-1} . It led to the AED due to consuming ^{210}Po in the selected water sources for adults, children, and infants within the allowable limit of 100 $\mu\text{Sv.y}^{-1}$. It was relatively safe for residents in the study area regarding the ^{210}Po in drinking water.

Acknowledgments

This research is funded by Vietnam National Foundation for Science and Technology Development (NAFOSTED) under grant number 105.99-2020.02.

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