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# SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL VARIATIONS OF AEROSOL SULFATE AND TRACE ELEMENTS IN A SOURCE-DOMINATED URBAN ENVIRONMENT\*

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#### **Abstract**

Time-resolved measurements of  $SO_2$ , sulfate, particulate carbon, and trace metal (Pb, As, K, Mn, Fe, and V) concentrations were performed simultaneously at four locations in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia, during February and April, 1985. During the winter three different sulfate formation regimes are identified:  $A -$  morning period coinciding with maximum emissions and high humidity resulting in maximum sulfate concentrations, with the sulfate formation during this period attributed to fast heterogeneous, aqueous oxidation of local  $SO_2$  involving combustion products;  $B$  - late evening period with low humidity and high emissions when most sulfate is primary;  $C -$  the remainder of the day when sulfate appears to be of a regional origin and formed by a combination of heterogeneous and homogeneous processes. During the nonheating season, the sulfate appears to be of regional origin.

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## **Introduction**

Both local and regional sources contribute to the aerosol sulfate in urban environments. Local sources include primary sulfate produced by the oxidation of fuel sulfur to S(VI) during the combustion process, and secondary sulfate produced by oxidation of sulfur dioxide in the local atmosphere. Regional sulfate is formed by the oxidation of  $SO_2$ released farther upwind. The relative contribution of these sulfate sources to the urban atmosphere depends on the spatial distribution of sources, the meteorology and topography, and the concentrations of oxidants, oxidative catalysts, and other reactive species. For example, in the eastern United States, where most major  $SO_2$  sources are located outside urban areas, conversion processes during transport produce regional aerosol sulfate, whose concentrations vary little between the cities and the surrounding areas (Altshuller, 1980, 1987). Consequently, under such circumstances sulfate produced locally in the city is of relatively minor importance. In contrast, local sulfate may be important in many urban situations where significant  $SO_2$  sources are within the local area, and when concentrations of pollutants may reach very high levels because of stagnant meteorological conditions and temperature inversions.

The measurements described in this study were performed in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia, a city of approximately 300,000 inhabitants located in a basin surrounded on three sides by mountains. During the winter, the principal  $SO_2$  source is coal burning for space heating in residential boilers and home furnaces. In the winter of 1983-84, we conducted a study in Ljubljana with analysis of 24-hr aerosol samples collected at a single central city location (Bizjak *et al.,* 1986). During that study frequent periods of atmospheric stagnation occurred, often accompanied by urban fog and persistent subfreezing temperatures. Under these conditions, favorable for aqueous heterogeneous processes, we have observed the highest aerosol sulfate formation, corresponding to the conversion of up to 20% of the  $SO<sub>2</sub>$ . We have also found circumstantial evidence that this sulfate is of local origin. These conclusions agree with those reached by Benarie *et al.* (1973), who studied wintertime air pollution in the industrial Rouen region. These authors have determined  $SO_2$  oxidation rates to be between 6 and  $25\%$  hr<sup>-1</sup> and have attributed the sulfate formation to catalytic action of suspended solid particles.

The new field experiments described in this paper, carried out during February and April, 1985, were designed to differentiate local and regional sulfates. Measurements were performed simultaneously at four locations, providing city-wide temporal variations on the concentrations of  $SO_2$ , particulate sulfate, carbon, trace metals (Pb, As, K, V, Mn, and Fe), and meteorological parameters.

Results obtained in this study show that during high pollution episodes in winter (February), three separate sulfate formation processes can be distinguished. Depending on meteorological conditions and source emission intensity, these result in the formation of local secondary, local primary, and regional aerosol sulfate. In contrast, during nonheating periods when local  $SO_2$  emissions are decreased, the sulfate is principally of regional origin. Although the measurements reported in this paper were performed during only two days in February and three in April, 1985, we believe that these do not describe isolated events but are representative of a systematic wintertime pattern in this source-dominated region. It is also likely that similar manifestations of fast, local sulfate formation can be found in other regions where coal is extensively used for space heating, particularly during cold winter days when consumption of this fuel is highest. The winter of 1985 was exceptionally cold in most of Europe; and severe  $SO_2$ , smoke, and sulfate pollution episodes were observed throughout the continent, including neighboring Hungary (Meszaros *et al.,* 1987).

#### **Experimental Detaila**

Ground-level aerosol samples were collected at four sites with synchronized sequential samplers. The locations of sampling sites are shown in Fig. 1 on a map of the city of Ljubljana. Site CC was in the city center, IRl and IR2 were in mixed industrialresidential areas, and RS was in a residential area.

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The inlets to the sequential samplers (about 2 m above ground) were heated so the sampled air was  $5^{\circ}C$  above ambient air temperature. During fog episodes the heating of the air stream evaporates fog droplets; therefore the total aerosol, including any material incorporated into fog droplets, was collected. A metal shield placed above the sampler inlet prevents the precipitating droplets from entering the sampler. The aerosol was sampled at a flow rate of 40 liters  $min^{-1}$ . Sampling times were usually set to collect eight 2hr samples from 0800 to 2400 hr, and two 4-hr samples starting at 2400 and 0400 hr. The samples were collected on 25-mm diameter quartz fiber filters (Pallflex type 2500  $QAO$ ) that had been prefired at 700 °C to remove combustible carbon.

The heavily loaded filters collected in February were divided into halves; one half was analyzed at Berkeley for trace metals by x-ray fluorescence, the other at Ljubljana for total C and S by combustion followed by conductometric  $CO_2$  and  $SO_2$  determination (Wösthoff Co. C and S analyzer). The April samples were more lightly loaded, and the entire filter had to be used for the C and S analysis; trace metal data were therefore not obtained for these samples. During our previous studies in Ljubljana, the analysis of filters for total sulfur by combustion and for water-soluble sulfate (mostly present as ammonium sulfate) by ion chromatography yielded results that were in excellent agreement (Bizjak *et al.*, 1986). We therefore assume that the particulate sulfur, S<sub>p</sub>, is in the form of sulfate. Previous work also demonstrated that the total particulate carbon,  $C_p$ , is equivalent to primary carbon (i.e., soot) during winter at this location (Bizjak *et al.*,

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During the February sampling period, the Slovenian Hydrometeorological Institute continuously monitored  $SO_2$  concentrations adjacent to the four aerosol sampling sites (Monitor Labs  $SO_2$  analyzers) and recorded meteorological variables including wind speed and direction, temperature, and relative humidity. During the April sampling period, these measurements were not made.

The meteorological conditions for the February sampling period can be summarized as follows: February 18 was clear with no temperature inversion. February 19 and 20 were foggy in the city but clear in the surrounding mountains. The low-lying city fog persisted until about 1000 hrs on both days. A temperature inversion existed on February 19 and 20 during part of the night and morning, but not during the rest of the day. The temperature inversion was stronger on February 20 than on February 19. Because of such meteorological conditions, significant buildup of airborne pollutants occurred on February 20.

#### Results and Discussion

In this section we will first examine the evidence for local sulfate formation by examining the spatial and temporal variations of  $SO_2$ , sulfate, and tracer elements. This approach uses the fact that  $SO_2$  sources are not evenly distributed throughout the city. The highest emissions during winter are in the city center (site CC}, where in older buildings much of the coal is burned in individual stoves that are usually stoked in the morning and evening. In the outer residential districts (site RS), the emissions are lower because of lower population density and the prevalence of central heating. Locally generated sulfate should, under stagnant atmospheric conditions, exhibit a spatial inhomogeneity similar to that of primary species produced by the combustion of sulfurcontaining fuels. In contrast, when the emissions from local sources are greatly diminished (April), a greater spatial homogeneity of sulfate concentrations can be expected.

Figure 2 shows half-hour average  $SO_2$  concentrations at the four sites for February 19 and 20, 1985.  $SO_2$  concentrations (peaking in excess of 1.2 mg m<sup>-3</sup> in the city center) exhibit pronounced morning and evening maxima that are highest in the city center and decrease toward the suburbs in the sequence CC, IR1, IR2, and RS. This clearly reflects the distribution of  $SO_2$  sources and the pattern of daily fuel consumption.

Temporal variations of sulfate concentrations at the four sites for February 19 and 20 are shown in Fig. 3. Spatial distribution of peak sulfate concentrations resembles that of  $SO_2$ . This is particularly pronounced in the February 20 data during the morning period corresponding to maximum morning  $SO_2$  emissions. The highest 2-hr sulfate concentrations were measured at the city center, and lowest at the residential suburban site. The similarity between the spatial distributions of peak sulfate and  $SO_2$  concentrations is indicative of the local origin of these sulfate particles.

Diurnal concentration variations for February 20 of As, K, and Pb (i.e., the tracer elements for the principal fuels coal, wood, and gasoline, respectively) are shown in Fig. 4. The diurnal and spatial variations of the coal tracer (As) follow very closely those of sulfate. K and Pb concentrations also show a degree of spatial inhomogeneity, although less pronounced than  $SO_2$ , As, and sulfate. This is to be expected, however, because coal – not wood or gasoline - is the principal source of atmospheric sulfur. Concentrations of particulate carbon, a tracer for incomplete combustion (shown in Fig. 5), strongly resemble those of sulfate and As and, to a lesser degree,  $SO_2$ , K, and Pb.

This apparent relationship between sulfate and primary emission species can have at least two explanations: either most sulfate is primary or it is produced by an  $SO_2$  oxidation process in the urban atmosphere. In the following discussion, we will demonstrate

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that the latter is the more likely explanation.

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Evidence for atmospheric  $SO_2$  oxidation is obtained by considering the details of the diurnal variations of sulfate,  $SO_2$ , carbon, and tracer elements. The data for February 20 from the four sites are tabulated in Table I. That most of the sulfate is not primary is evident from the particulate to gaseous sulfur ratios  $(S_p/S_g)$ .  $(S_g$  is the  $SO_2$  concentration expressed as sulfur.) These range on the average from  $\sim 0.05$  to  $\sim 0.20$ . The variability of these ratios is indicative of atmospheric conversion because primary sulfate should constitute a relatively constant fraction of  $SO_2$  emissions.

A direct proof for atmospheric  $SO_2$  oxidation to sulfate is obtained by comparing the ambient  $S_p/S_g$  ratios with those determined for stack emissions of various source types at this location. A recently determined average  $S_p/S_g$  source ratio for coal and oil burning is  $\sim 0.02$  (Bizjak *et al.,* 1987). This value is considerably lower than practically all ambient ratios, thus demonstrating that atmospheric  $SO_2$  oxidation to sulfate does take place.

Further insight into the nature of the  $SO_2$  oxidation process is gained by considering details of the diurnal variations of meteorological parameters and chemical species. Figure 6 shows variations of relative humidity, ambient temperature,  $SO_2$ , sulfate, particulate carbon, and  $S_p/S_g$  and  $S_p/C_p$  concentration ratios for February 20 at site CC. Three separate sulfate formation regimes can be distinguished from the data presented in Figure 6 and Table I. These correspond to:

A- The morning period (0800-1000), which coincides with maximum emissions; the  $S_p/S_g$  ratio increased by 115% between the 0400-0800 and 0800-1000 periods, corresponding to an apparent oxidation rate of  $57\%$ hr<sup>-1</sup>.

B - The late evening period (2000-2400) when the  $S_p/S_g$  ratios were of the order of

a few percent and similar to the values obtained from stack sampling.

C - During the rest of the day, a gradual increase of the  $S_p/S_g$  ratios is seen, corresponding to apparent oxidation rates of  $\sim 6\%$  hr<sup>-1</sup> and  $\sim 10\%$  hr<sup>-1</sup> for the time periods between 0000 and 0800, and 1000 and 2000 respectively.

During the time periods corresponding to these regimes, different sulfate formation mechanisms could take place.

In the following we shall first discuss the observations relating to regime  $A - i.e.,$ the apparent local sulfate formation during morning hours. The local nature of this sulfate is suggested by its spatial inhomogeneity, which is similar to that of  $SO_2$ . The fact that the morning sulfate peak coincides with the  $SO_2$  increase but the evening  $SO_2$  peak does not demonstrates that the intense morning sulfate peak is caused not only by the  $SO_2$  increase. The lack of exact correspondence between  $SO_2$  and sulfate is also evident from the difference in the duration (or width) of their respective morning peaks (Fig. 6). The  $\text{SO}_2$  concentration remained essentially constant during the 4-hr period (0800-1200 hr), while the sulfate peak was confined to the first two hours of this period {0800-1000). In spite of the persisting large  $SO_2$  concentrations between 1000-1200 hr, sulfate decreased by about a factor of three from the preceding 0800-1000 hr time period. Between 0800 and 1000 hr, the  $S_p/S_g$  and  $S_p/S_g$  ratios are at maximum values, indicating enhanced sulfate formation during this period. Why is the sulfate formation particularly pronounced during the 0800-1000 period but not the 1000-1200 period? The answer to this question is in the meteorology.

The data in Fig. 6 show that the relative humidity was  $> 90\%$  during the night and part of the morning, sharply decreasing after 1000 hr. From visual observations at the sampling site, we know that during the morning hours there was dense ground fog. However, the fog dissipated after 1000 hr and did not recur for the rest of the day. Therefore

the maximum morning emissions occurred during both foggy and nonfoggy conditions. A sulfate peak, however, was observed only during the high-humidity, foggy period. These facts suggest an aqueous oxidation mechanism. Such a mechanism would be much less efficient between 1000-1200 hr than between 0800-1000 hr because of the decreased liquid water content. Aqueous reactions would therefore produce different sulfate amounts even if the  $SO_2$ , catalyst, and oxidant concentrations were the same during these two time periods. From the considerations presented thus far we can conclude that during regime A sulfate is formed locally by a fast aqueous process that coincides with the onset of morning emissions of  $SO_2$  and other combustion products.

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We now examine the various candidate aqueous heterogeneous reaction mechanisms that may be responsible for this apparently local oxidation of  $SO_2$ . These may in principle involve catalytic oxidation by transition metal ions, aqueous reactions with photochemical oxidants, and oxidation reactions involving products of incomplete combustion. Although a complete assessment of these mechanisms is impossible with the available data, several mechanisms can be ruled out.

We may first eliminate the possibility of catalysis by transition metals. Figure 7 shows the variations of Mn, Fe, and V at sites  $CC$ , IR1, and RS. We see that none of these variations correlates with those of sulfate at those sites. In fact, the lowest trace metal concentrations were measured at site CC, which had the highest sulfate concentrations.

Second, we consider ozone and other photochemically generated oxidants. Although photochemical oxidants were not monitored at our sites, it is very unlikely that high ground-level concentrations of oxidants would be produced under winter conditions with dense fog. Measurements of gas-phase  $H_2O_2$  and  $O_3$  concentrations performed elsewhere in Europe (Po Valley, Italy) under similar foggy conditions in winter show that these are

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negligible (Fuzzi *et al.,* 1986; Lind and Lazrus, 1986). We therefore assume that photochemically generated oxidants do not contribute significantly to the formation of local morning sulfate.

From the evidence presented so far, we are inclined to hypothesize that the rapid  $SO<sub>2</sub>$  oxidation observed in the morning period is caused by incomplete combustion products in the presence of liquid water droplets (Brodzinsky *et al.,* 1980; Chang *et al.,* 1981; Novakov, 1984; Benner *et al.,* 1985). Field evidence supporting this hypothesis was obtained by Eatough *et al.* (1984), who observed rapid sulfate formation when the plume of an oil-burning power plant impacted on a fog bank. A direct laboratory proof for the occurrence of aqueous  $SO_2$  oxidation byproducts of incomplete combustion was recently obtained by Benner and Novakov (1987) from cloud chamber experiments. These experiments were designed to simulate the conditions when a plume of freshly generated soot particles interact with liquid water droplets. These authors have observed rapid  $SO_2$  oxidation to sulfate  $(> 100\% \text{ hr}^{-1})$  when water droplets are nucleated on combustiongenerated soot particles in the presence of  $SO_2$ , other combustion products, and gaseous ammonia. Sulfate formation was either negligible or minimal in the absence of ammonia, liquid water droplets, or soot particles. (Ammonia is abundantly present in the European atmosphere [Buijsman *et al.,* 1987]. We are unaware of an ammonia emissions inventory for this specific location. However, high concentrations of ammonium sulfate and other ammonium salts were measured in Ljubljana [Puxbaum *et al.,* 1985]. Another significant source of particle alkalinity at the sites of this study is the coal fly ash.) These results are in qualitative agreement with our ambient observation of rapid sulfate formation during the morning high emission period. We note that the emissions at our study site are mostly from low chimneys, and therefore fast mixing of ambient air, including ammonia with the plume constituents is expected.

Most of the above discussion is relevant to the processes responsible for the formation of high concentrations of sulfate during morning hours (regime A). As we have mentioned, at other periods of the day different  $SO_2$  oxidation mechanisms may be involved. For example, regime B is characteristic of primary sulfate emissions because ambient  $S_p/S_g$  ratios are low, similar to those obtained from source samplings. Sulfate concentrations during this time period are low in spite of very high gaseous  $SO_2$  concentrations. The relative humidity was  $\sim 70\%$ ; from visual observations we know that there was no fog during this period. Such conditions were therefore not conducive for aqueous  $SO_2$  oxidation.

During the rest of the day (regime C), a gradual increase in the  $S_p/S_g$  ratios was observed. Two separate atmospheric conditions existed during this regime: a high humidity and foggy period from 0000 to 0800; and a low humidity, clear air interval between 1200 and 2000. Judging from the  $S_p/S_g$  and  $S_p/C_p$  ratios,  $SO_2$  oxidation did take place during both periods. It is plausible to assume that heterogeneous aqueous oxidation occurred during the former period and that a homogeneous process or processes took place during the latter. An assessment of the actual mechanisms is impossible at this time, however, because of the lack of pertinent  $-$  particularly gas phase  $-$  data. It is of interest to note, however, that because of low ambient temperatures (reaching  $-13 \degree C$  at the time of the sulfate concentration peak), aqueous  $SO_2$  oxidation reactions have to proceed in supercooled water droplets and therefore at reduced oxidation rates .

From the above discussion we conclude that during different periods of the day aerosol sulfate could be formed by different processes. These could involve local  $SO_2$  oxidation (regime A), local sulfate emissions (regime B), and possibly oxidation of regional  $SO_2$ (regime C). The latter possibility is suggested by the fact that the sulfate concentrations are relatively homogeneously distributed throughout the city during time periods

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corresponding to regime C (see Table I).

The above discussion is based on the February data, typical of heavy winter pollution with air stagnation and foggy days. During the April sampling period, an entirely different picture was observed. The principal differences were in meteorology, the concentration of species, and their spatial and temporal variations. The April measuring period was characterized by calm days with temperatures ranging from a low of about  $10\degree C$  to a midday high of about 20 °C. Nighttime relative humidities were  $> 90\%$  on April 8 and 9 and about 75% between April 9 and 10. The daytime relative humidities for the three days were between 63 and 38%. Sulfate and particulate carbon concentrations measured at the same sites as in February are shown in Table II. The sulfate concentrations were much lower during this period and, in contrast to February, homogeneously distributed throughout the city during most of the day. Particulate carbon was spatially more inhomogeneous than sulfate. From Fig. 8, where sulfate and carbon diurnal variations averaged for all sites are shown, it is evident that the sulfate and carbon peaks do not occur at the same time. Carbon peaks occurred only in the morning and preceded the sulfur peaks by 3-4 hr, indicating that carbon and sulfate originated from different sources. Carbon particles originate mostly from traffic, while, because of greatly reduced  $SO_2$ emissions in the city, ambient sulfate probably comes from regional sources. Differences in diurnal variations between February and April are also indicative of the differences in sulfate formation chemistry during the two sampling periods. While there is strong evidence that the February sulfate was produced largely by nonphotochemical mechanisms, April sulfate is most likely produced by photochemical oxidants. This possibility is suggested by the midday sulfate and  $S_p/C_p$  maxima (Fig. 8).

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Time-resolved measurements of  $SO_2$ , sulfate, particulate carbon, and trace metal (Ph, As, K, Mn, Fe and V) concentrations were performed simultaneously at four sites in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia, in February and April, 1985. The data are used to distinguish local from regional sulfate and to infer some possible mechanisms of sulfate formation at this location. Spatial inhomogeneity of local  $SO_2$  sources during the winter heating season is reflected in a similar inhomogeneity of peak sulfate concentration, indicating its local origin.

During winter days with stagnant air and low temperature inversion, three different sulfate formation regimes were identified:  $A$  - morning period coinciding with maximum emissions and high humidity resulting in maximum sulfate concentrations; the sulfate formation during this period is attributed to fast heterogeneous, aqueous oxidation of local  $SO_2$  involving combustion products (soot). B - late evening period with low humidity and high emissions when most sulfate is primary.  $C -$  the remainder of the day, when sulfate appears to be of a regional origin, formed by a combination of heterogeneous and homogeneous processes. The estimated  $SO_2$  conversion rates were 57% hr<sup>-1</sup> for regime A and between 6 and  $10\%$  hr<sup>-1</sup> for regime C.

During the April measurement period when the local  $SO_2$  emissions are greatly diminished, the sulfate was homogeneously distributed throughout the city at all times. This finding is indicative of regional sulfate formation.

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## TABLE I

Concentration variations of major pollutants and  $S_p/S_g$  and  $S_p/C_p$  ratios at four sites on 20 February 1985. Sampling start times correspond to local clock time. Sampling sites:  $CC - city center; IR1 - IR2 - mixed industrial-residental; RS- residential.$ 



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## TABLE II



#### Particulate carbon  $(C_p)$  and sulfur  $(S_p)$  concentrations measured at four sites during the period 8-10 April 1985. Starting times (local time) of each filter are indicated.

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#### **Figure Captions**

## Figure **1**

Map of Ljubljana showing the locations of the sampling sites:  $CC =$ city center, IR1 and  $IR2 =$  mixed industrial and residential districts,  $RS =$  residential area.

#### Figure 2

Half-hour average  $SO_2$  concentrations measured at the four sites on 19 and 20 February 1985. Peak concentrations decrease from the city center to the outlying residential areas.

## Figure 3

Diurnal variations of sulfate concentrations at the four sites for 19 and 20 February 1985. Peak sulfate concentrations are highest in the city center (CC) and lowest in the suburban location (RS).

#### Figure 4

Diurnal variations of As, K, and Pb concentrations at the four sites for 20 February 1985.

#### Figure 5

Diurnal variations of particulate carbon concentrations at the four sampling sites on 19 and 20 February 1985. The morning carbon peaks decrease from the city center (CC) to the outlying areas, similar to sulfate concentration peaks.

#### Figure 6

Diurnal variations of air temperature, relative humidity,  $SO_2$ , sulfate and carbon concentrations at the city center on 20 February 1985. Maximum  $S_p/S_g$  and  $S_p/C_p$ ratios are observed during the morning increase of primary emissions. These coincide with the last hours of the high humidity period.

#### Figure 7

Diurnal concentration variations of Mn, Fe, and V measured on 20 February 1985 at CC, IR1, and RS sites. Concentrations of these metals do not correlate with sulfate concentrations.

#### Figure 8

Concentration variation of particulate sulfur and carbon averaged over all sites for the 8-10 April 1985 period.  $S_p/C_p$  ratios show midday maxima. Carbon peaks precede sulfur peaks, indicating different sources of these species.



XBB 873-2004

Figure 1



**XBL 8612 4561** 

Figure 2



Time of day

XBL 8612 6554

Figure 3



Figure 4



Time of day

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Figure 8

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