Evaluation of Per- and Poly fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) *in vitro* toxicity testing for developmental neurotoxicity

Kelly E. Carstens^{†*}, Theresa Freudenrich[†], Kathleen Wallace[†], Seline Choo[‡], Amy Carpenter[‡], Marci Smeltz[§], Matthew S. Clifton[§], W. Matthew Henderson[§], Ann M. Richard [†], Grace Patlewicz [†], Barbara A. Wetmore† , Katie Paul Friedman† , Timothy Shafer†

†Center for Computational Toxicology and Exposure, ORD, US EPA, RTP, NC 27711 ‡Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE), Oak Ridge, TN 37830 §Center for Environmental Measurement and Modeling, ORD, US EPA, RTP, NC 27711

Corresponding author: Kelly E. Carstens 109 T.W. Alexander Drive, Mail Drop D130-A Research Triangle Park, NC 27711 Email: Carstens.kelly@epa.gov Tel. 919-541-3834

Disclaimer: The United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) through its Office of Research and Development has subjected this article to Agency administrative review and approved it for publication. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute endorsement for use. The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views or policies of the US EPA.

Table of Contents

- **I. Figure S1**: PFAS screening approach in the DNT NAMs
- **II. Figure S2**: Frequency of PFAS representing six structural categories.
- **III. Figure S3**. Analytical QC results and physicochemical properties
- **IV. Figure S4**: Assay endpoint sensitivity to PFAS
- **V. Figure S5**: Concentration response curve PFOA positive response
- **VI. Figure S6**: Ranked AUC sum in the MEA NFA
- **VII. Figure S7**: Heatmap of PFAS efficacy and/or potency in the HCI
- **VIII. Figure S8**: Concentration response curves for positive responses in HCI mc screening assays
	- **IX. Figure S9**: Linear regression analysis comparing physicochemical properties and AC₅₀ values
	- **X. Figure S10**: PFAS efficacy compared to all available chemicals tested in the DNT NAM battery.
	- **XI. Figure S11**: BioMAP and Attagene bioactivity comparison
- **XII. Supporting Information Methods**

Figure S1: PFAS screening approach in the DNT NAMs

An original PFAS procurement set and previous DNT screening data (1) including 74 PFAS were screened in only mc screening. A subset of 136 PFAS were screened in a tiered screening approach (2) whereby PFAS were first screened in sc screening and subsequently screened in mc screening if the chemical demonstrated at least one positive response in the sc screening using a tiered screening analysis method described in the Supporting Information Methods. Note that the activity classifications ('Active', 'Inactive') from the tiered screening analysis differ from the ToxCast Analysis Pipeline (tcpl) due to differences in the methods (Supporting Information Methods).

Figure S2: Frequency of PFAS representing six structural categories.

Of the 160 PFAS screened in the DNT NAM battery, 89 PFAS were captured by the six distinct structural groups based on classification guidance provided by the OECD/UNEP Global PFC group. The perfluoroalkyl acids (PFAAs) had the largest representation of the six structural groups with 29 PFAS. FASA: perfluoroalkane sulfonamide.

Figure S3. Analytical QC results and physicochemical properties

QC pass/ fail results were compared across four physicochemical properties: molecular weight (MW), logP, boiling point (BP), and log10 vapor pressure (log10.VP). The shapes indicate whether the PFAS was active or inactive in the DNT NAMs (active was defined as a chemical demonstrating at least one positive response; chemicals classified as equivocal were classified as inactive in this analysis). Horizontal lines indicate the mean, and the p-value indicates significance by a Student's t-test.

Figure S4: Assay endpoint sensitivity to PFAS

Ai: Bar plot indicates the number of chemicals for which each endpoint determined the minimum AC_{50} value per chemical. Bars are pseudo-colored by activity type. Note that not all PFAS were tested in both assay technologies therefore plots are faceted by assay technology. Aii: Table indicating the mean AC₅₀ value by endpoint for all positive responses in the mc DNT NAM screening, excluding PFAS that failed QC. B: Concentration response curves (generated using the 'tcpl_v.2.1.0' R package) for the eight PFAS for which the endpoint measuring 'bursting electrodes number dn' determined the minimum AC_{50} value. Red numbers indicate the curve ID shown in the table in C. C: Table with interpretation and conclusion for each concentration response curve shown in B. The 'hit sum' indicates the sum of positive responses for each chemical in the DNT NAM mc screening, the 'N mc endpoints tested' indicates the total number of endpoints measured for each chemical, 'Mean AC₅₀' and 'StDev AC₅₀' indicate the mean and standard deviation of the AC_{50} values for each compound in log10-uM and in uM, the 'QC Pass/ Fail' indicates the analysitcal QC testing results, and the curve ID corresponds to the curves shown in B.

Figure S4A

i) Endpoint that determines the minimum potency (AC₅₀) by chemical

Figure S4B

200

 100

 ϵ

 $\frac{1}{2}$

 $\substack{0\\200}$.

Percent Activity

 $\overline{7}$

PLAGS:

MAX_MEAN: 100 MAX_MED: 100 BMAD: 12.8 $\texttt{COPP: } 38.3 \quad \texttt{HT-CALL: } 1 \quad \texttt{PTTC: } 41 \quad \texttt{ACTP: } 1$

AEID2500 (CCTE_Shafer_MEA_dev_bursting_electro NAME: (Heptafluorobutanoyl)pivaloylmethane
CHID: 66215 CASEN: 17587-22-3
SPID(S): 1210314361
M4ID: 42619837 RTLL MODEL (in red):

val: 57.1 1.12 7.98

val: 57.1 1.12 7.98

ad: 37.4 3.3 213 3L (in b
ga
1.12
NaN GAIN-LOSS N

val: 97.1

sd: NaN e) :
gw
7.95
NaN la lw
1.76 17.6
NaN NaN CNST
AIC: 230.69
PROB: 0.01
RMSE: 54.12 HILL
222.04
0.87
39.7 GNLS
226.04
0.12
39.7

NAX_MEAN: 97

NAX_MEAN: 97

COFF: 38.3 HIT-CALL: 1 FITC: 41 ACTF: 0.99

FLAGS: 6; 10

Figure S4C

Figure S5: Concentration response curve PFOA positive response

Concentration response curve (generated using the 'tcpl_v.2.1.0' R package) for the one positive response for PFOA in the mc MEA NFA.

ASSAY: AEID2514 (CCTE_Shafer_MEA_dev_spike_duration_me

Figure S6: Ranked AUC sum in the MEA NFA

The ranked AUC sum was calculated by taking the sum of all AUCs across the MEA NFA endpoint per PFAS (log2 transformed) and ranking the chemicals from highest to lowest. Tributyltin is included as a positive control for DNT NAM activity. Data points are pseudo-colored with the OECD structural category groupings.

Figure S7: Heatmap of PFAS efficacy and/or potency in the HCI

Rows of the heatmap indicate chemical activity in each activity type. Column color legend indicates the efficacy and potency as measured by an area under the curve (AUC) metric. Yellow indicates inactivity (AUC of zero), whereas increasing pink to black colors indicates increasing AUC values (higher efficacy and/or potency). Tributyltin is included as a historically DNT NAM-active compound. Color of row text label (right) indicates whether the PFAS passed QC (black) or failed QC (red). An asterisk following the row text label indicates that the PFAS bioactivity was equivocal. Row color legend (left) indicates the number of C atoms in each chemical binned into three groups.

Figure S8: A, B: Concentration response curves for positive responses in HCI mc screening assays Concentration response curves (generated using the 'tcpl_v.2.1.0' R package) for the active PFAS in the HCI mc screening assays.

Figure S8A

Percent

 ϵ

 $_{\rm cent}$

ă

Activity

ercent

cent

Figure S8B

CCTE Mundy HCI CDI NOG NeuriteLength_loss

CCTE_Mundy_HCI_CDI_NOG_NeuriteLength_loss

CCTE_Mundy_HCI_CDI_NOG_NeuronCount_loss

ASSAY: AEID3069 (CCTE_Mundy_HCI_CDI_NOG_NeuriteLength

NAME: 3:3 Pluorotelomer carboxylic acid
CHID: 379268 CASRN: 356-02-5
SPID(S): 1210314388
M4ID: 43471625

HILL
255.81
0.87
14.34

 $\texttt{COFF}: \texttt{30} \qquad \texttt{MIT-CALL}: \texttt{1} \qquad \texttt{FITC}: \texttt{42} \qquad \texttt{ACTP}: \texttt{1}$

ASSAY: AEID3070 (CCTE_Mundy_HCI_CDI_NOG_NeuronCount_l NAME: 3-(Perfluoro-3-methylbuty1)-1,2-propenoxide
CHID: 379884 CASRE: 54009-81-3
SPID(S): 1208990411
M4ID: 43471655

gw
0.3
0.423

GNLS
258.95
0.12
14.77

GAIN-LOSS MODEL (in blue):

tp ga gw la

val: 55.2 1 0.307 2.46

sd: 99 4.61 0.269 1210

HILL
254.89
0.88
14.69

MAX_MEAN: 38.5 MAX_MED: 31.1 BMAD: 8.04

 $\texttt{COFF: } 30 \qquad \texttt{BIT-CALL: } 1 \qquad \texttt{PTTC: } 42 \qquad \texttt{ACTP: } 1$

MAX_MEAN: 35.2 MAX_MED: 36.8

 $\frac{dW}{d}$
NaN

 $\begin{array}{c} 1a\\ 1.97\\ \mathrm{NaN} \end{array}$

GNLS
259.66
0.13
14.32

 $\begin{array}{c}\n1 \text{w} \\
14 \\
\text{Na}8\n\end{array}$

 $BMD: 9.14$

 $1w$
4.57
3730

HILL MODEL (in red):

CNST
AIC: 271.11
PROB: 0
RMSE: 21.6

 $FLAGS: 7; 17$

WILL MODEL (in red):

tp ga

val: 68.9 1.5

sd: 256 9.46

CMST
AIC: 270.31
PROB: 0
RMSE: 22.03

 $\texttt{PLASS: } 11; 17$

tp ga
val: 39.4 0.512
ed: NaN NaN

CCTE_Mundy_HCI_CDI_NOG_NeuriteLength_loss

CCTE_Mundy_HCI_CDI_NOG_NeuriteLength_loss

Concentration (µM)

ASSAY: AEID3069 (CCTE_Mundy_RCI_CDI_NOG_NeuriteLength NAME: 2,2,3,3,4,4,4-Heptafluorobutyl methacrylate
CHID: 65566 CASRN: 13695-31-3
SPID:0:1210314373
MAID: 43471582
MAID: 43471582 HILL MODEL (in red): tp ga
val: 60.7 1.43
ed: NaN NaN $\frac{gw}{7.92}$
 NaN GAIN-LOSS MODEL (in blu
tp ga
val: 59.6 1.43
sd: NA NA 10) :
음
-
NA $\begin{array}{c} 1a\\ 3.02\\ \hline 8A \end{array}$ $\frac{1}{17}$. 7
Ma CNST
AIC: 259.72
PROB: 0
RMSE: 18.43 GNLS
248.84
0.12
12.73 HILL
244.84
0.88
12.73 **MAX_MBAN:** 42.1 MAX_MED: 38.4 **BMAD: 9.14** $\texttt{COFF: } 30 \qquad \texttt{HT-CALL: } 1 \qquad \texttt{FITC: } 42 \qquad \texttt{ACTP: } 1$ $\texttt{FLAGS}: \begin{array}{cc} 7 & 17 \end{array}$

Figure S9: Linear regression analysis comparing physicochemical properties and AC₅₀ values Scatter plots comparing AC_{50} values (log10- μ M) in the DNT NAM battery and chemical properties: molecular weight (MW), C:F ratio, logP, boiling point (BP), and vapor pressure (VP (log10)), and CF chain length. A linear regression line equation and correlation coefficients (R) with p-values for significance (p< 0.05) are plotted.

Figure S10: PFAS efficacy compared to all available chemicals tested in the DNT NAM battery. A: A cumulative density distribution plot of efficacy as measured by AUC sum (sum of all AUC values for each active endpoint by chemical) for all available chemicals screened in the DNT NAM data. B: A density plot comparing active PFAS efficacy (AUC sum) (gray) to all other active non-PFAS chemicals (blue). The x-axis indicates the log10 AUC sum values.

Figure S11: BioMAP and Attagene bioactivity comparison

A: Scatter plots comparing AC₅₀ values (log10-uM) in the BioMAP (orange) and Attagene (gray) assays for PFAS that were inactive in the DNT NAMs. B: Density plot comparing the PFAS potencies in the BioMAP (green), Attagene (red), and DNT NAMs (green). C: Density plot comparing the potencies of all available chemical tested across BioMAP (green), Attagene (red), and DNT NAMs (green).

B) Density plot comparing PFAS potencies in the BioMAP, Attagene and DNT NAMs

C) Density plot potencies for all available chemicals tested across the three assay suites

Supporting Information Methods

Single-concentration (sc) screening analysis

HCI assays (proliferation, apoptosis, NOG)

The goal of the single-concentration screen was to provide a health-protective estimate of which compounds would be a hit in the multiple-concentration screening, so in a first approach the hit-call determination was based on the same normalization methods used in the multiple-concentration screening in the ToxCast Pipeline (tcpl). For every HCI endpoint currently registered in tcpl (Table 1), the percentof-control response values are calculated from the raw value (*rval*) and median DMSO *rval* on each plate (*bval)* with this formula:

$$
resp. pc = \frac{rval - bval}{bval} * 100\%
$$

Thus, the *resp.pc* represents a zero-centered, normalized response value. For all assay components except CCTE_Mundy_HCI_Cortical_NOG_Casp3_7, the *resp* value is multiplied by -1 so that a decrease in *resp* will lead to an increasing dose-response curve. The *bmad* is calculated as the median absolute deviation of the *resp.pc* in all control wells in the dataset. The current cutoff for HCI assay endpoints in multi-concentration screening in tcpl is defined as 3x*bmad* above the median control value or 30%, whichever is larger. (For 12 of the 17 assay endpoints currently in tcpl, 3x*bmad* is less than 30%).

Table 1: The 17 HCI endpoints in tcpl and the associated coff and 3xBMAD values for the multipleconcentration screening.

Verifying the Proposed hit call method

The available multiple-concentration HCI data in tcpl were analyzed to verify if the median *resp.pc* at the highest concentration tested could provide a health-protective metric for the hit-call in a singleconcentration screen against 2 or 3 x *bmad*. Particularly, the hits where the median *resp.pc* is less than the *max med* were examined (e.g. if the dose-response curve is "biphasic" (aka 'gain-loss') or if the dose response curve is slightly noisy). The available HCI data in tcpl includes $\sim 80+$ compounds.

The 2x*bmad* threshold was found to detect all but 4 compounds that were labelled as "hits" in the multiple-concentration screening. The 4 compounds that were missed all fit a "gain-loss" dose-response curve.

hitc aeid aenm spid bmad med_resp_at_max_conc

Conclusion: 2x*bmad* will provide a good estimate for the single-concentration screen hit calls.

Applying Single-Concentration Hit Calls to PFAS data

- Pre-processing
	- \circ Removed any data points where the Well quality is 0
	- o Renamed any wells labelled as "Blank", "NA", or "Media" from each assay as "Media"
	- o Defined the "wllt" (well type) as:
		- If Compund.Name is Media or DMSO, wllt = "n" to signify neutral controls. (In contrast, the tcpl single-concentration methods only utilize DMSO wells).
		- Otherwise, wllt = "t" (to signify test compounds)
- Found the median raw value of control wells on each plate (where wllt == "n") (*bval*)
- Calculated the normalized, zero-centered *resp.pc* from every raw value

$$
resp. pc = \frac{rval - bval}{bval} * 100\%
$$

- Calculated the rescaled Median Absolute Deviation of wells where wllt == "n" for each endpoint:

 $bmad = 1.4826 * median(|control_i - median(controls))|)$

- Found the median *resp.pc* for each sample and endpoint
	- \circ In order to be more health-protective, where there were only 2 replicates with Well Quality=1, set the *med_resp_up* as the maximum *resp.pc*, and the *med_resp_dn* as the minimum *resp.pc*
- Determined the hit calls for each sample for each endpoint:
	- o If the median *resp.pc_dn* is less than or equal to -2x*bmad*, then the sample is a "down" hit
	- o If the median *resp.pc_up* is greater than or equal to 2x*bmad*, then the sample is an "up" hit
	- o Otherwise, the sample is a "no hit"

Final results

There are 53 samples with a hit in at least 1 assay (Supporting Information Methods Table 1). See 'hit_call_summary' sheet for summary of hit-call results for any HCI assay ('any_hit' column). For raw data values for this analysis, see sheets labeled 'all values' or 'values' for no hit compounds' for data on compounds with activity or no activity, respectively.

MEA NFA

This work aims to find an appropriate combination of endpoints and thresholds to determine which compounds tested in the Network Formation Assay (NFA) single-concentration screen are likely to be active in the NFA multi-concentration screen. The response values at the highest concentration tested and corresponding hit calls from the multi-concentration screen were used to select the most informative endpoints and to develop cutoffs. Then, the cutoffs for the selected set of endpoints were applied to the median percent-of-control response values of the PFAS NFA single-concentration screen to determine which compounds should be re-tested in the multi-concentration screen.

Multi-concentration Analysis

Preparation of multi-concentration data

The current multi-concentration NFA data set includes 422 samples, taken from several chemical sets, with the prefix "CCTE_Shafer_MEA_dev_." Data were processed as follows:

- Removed any hits from the multi-conc data with 3 or more flags.
- Removed any hits where the AC_{50} is less than the lowest concentration tested and the top modl parameter is less than 1.2*cutoff (fit category 36 or 45).

A sample was defined as "positive" in the multi-concentration screen if it has 3 or more unfiltered hits. This resulted in 236 "positives" and 186 "negatives."

Selection of Endpoints and Cutoffs

The goal of this analysis is to identify a combination of endpoints and cutoffs that will detect as many positives as possible while minimizing the number of false positives. There are 66 total endpoints to choose from: 2 cytotoxicity endpoints (LDH and AB), 17 parameters analyzed in the up and down direction, and 15 "DIV12" endpoints analyzed in the up and down direction $(2 + 17*2 + 15*2 = 2+34+30)$ $= 66$ total).

Algorithm to compile a set of endpoints and cutoffs (based on the "greedy algorithm"):

- 1) Start with the 2 cytotoxicity endpoints (LDH and Alamar Blue) as the initial endpoints with a cutoff of 30% for each (corresponding to a 30% decrease in viability relative to controls). Any sample with a median response at the highest concentration tested above 30 for either endpoint is labelled as "sc_positive." This resulted in the detection of 178 true positives and 11 false negatives.
- 2) For each remaining endpoint, set the cutoff just above the highest response for the remaining undetected negatives. Specifically,
	- a. Set the lower bound of the cutoff as the highest med_resp_max_conc of the undetected negatives for each endpoint
	- b. Set the upper bound of the cutoff as the lowest med_resp_max_conc of the undetected positives that is above the lower bound of the cutoff
	- c. Set the cutoff as the mid-point between the upper and lower bounds. In this way, the cutoff is high enough that no additional negatives will be a "hit."
- 3) Add the endpoint to the set that will add the most additional true positives. If there is a tie among endpoints, arbitrarily select one of them. Any sample with a median response at the highest concentration tested above the cutoff for the selected endpoint is labelled as "sc_positive."
- 4) Repeat from 2) until no additional true positives can be detected.

The algorithm was run at every juncture where there was a tie in the number of additional true positives at step 3. This resulted in 3 unique sets of endpoints and cutoffs (Supporting Information Methods Table 2). One of the 3 sets of endpoints with the corresponding cutoffs is shown below. Each row shows the accuracy of the detection of the multi-concentration positives after the addition of each endpoint.

The other 2 sets of endpoints varied by only 1 endpoint. They contained either "CCTE_Shafer_MEA_dev_mutual_information_norm_DIV12_up" or "CCTE_Shafer_MEA_dev_per_burst_spike_percent_DIV12_up" in place of "CCTE Shafer MEA dev mutual information norm up."

Using any of the 3 sets of endpoints and the given cutoffs, 224 of the 236 positives could be detected with only 11 false positives out of the 186 negatives. (The true positives and false positives detected were identical with each of the 3 sets). This resulted in a final accuracy of accuracy of 94.55%. Interestingly, the majority of the true positives were detected by the LDH and Alamar Blue endpoints.

Below is a visual depiction of the detection of the multi-concentration positives and negatives (Figure 1). The endpoints are sorted by order of addition to the set.

*Figure1. The plot shows that the responses in the 12 remaining undetected positives are largely not separable from the negatives. See Supporting Information Methods Table 2 for 3 unique sets of endpoints. The y-axis shows the median response at the highest conc tested for each sample, divided by the cutoff. Thus, any point above y=1 for the first 11 endpoints is a "hit" in the single-concentration screen. An arbitrary cutoff of 3*BMAD was used for the remaining 55 endpoints.*

Consideration of 3*BMAD for Cytotoxicity Cutoffs

The choice of 30% for the LDH and Alamar Blue cutoffs was somewhat arbitrary. In the multiconcentration screen in tcpl, the cutoff is set to 3 times the median absolute deviation of the percent-ofcontrol values in DMSO wells (BMAD). This corresponds to a cutoff of 24% for LDH and 20% for Alamar Blue. The algorithm was run using 3*BMAD as the cutoffs for LDH and Alamar Blue. This resulted in 21 false positives and 227 true positives. The addition of 3 true positives at the cost of 10 additional false positives did not seem beneficial. Therefore, 30% as the cutoff for the 2 cytotoxicity endpoints.

Application of the Endpoints and Cutoffs to the PFAS data

Normalization and Hit Call Determination

Single-concentration screen data processing:

- Calculated the "bval" as the median endpoint value of the DMSO control wells from each MEA plate
- Calculated the normalized "response" values:
	- o To measure the "up" response: $resp = \frac{real bval}{breal}$ $\frac{u - \nu u}{\text{bval}} * 100$
	- o To measure the "down" response: $resp = -1 * \frac{rval bval}{hval}$ $\frac{u - \nu u}{\text{bval}} * 100$
- Calculated the median response value of each endpoint for every sample
- Determined the hit calls using the endpoints selected in the multi-concentration analysis
	- \circ If the median response value for a given sample was greater than or equal to the cutoff for any of the 11 endpoints in the set, then that sample was labelled as a "positive"
	- o Otherwise, it was labelled as a "negative"

The hit-call determination was repeated with each of the 3 unique sets of endpoints found in the previous section. The first set resulted in 36 positives (including the positive control Bisphenol). The second set resulted in the same 36 positives plus 1 additional sample. The third set resulted in the same 37 positives as the previous sets, plus 1 additional sample. Since the third set resulted in the most hits, the third set was used to assign the final hit calls (Figure 2).

The number of hits per endpoint are summarized in the table and graph below:

Figure 2: Each point corresponds to the median response value for a sample divided by the cutoff. Any point above the horizontal line where max_med/coff = 1 is a "positive."

Final results

Positive/negative determination for each sample and hit-calls for each sample for each of the 11 endpoints ("sc_hit") can be found in Supporting Information Methods Table 3. Cutoffs were set to the cutoffs determined in the multi-concentration analysis.