

## Supplementary material

The analytical method for the measurement of PCBs was initially developed in serum (Mariani et al. 2002; Turci et al. 2004), but was extended to plasma and whole blood. Analyses of PCBs in whole blood, serum, and plasma derived from the same blood sample were performed. The results showed no major differences between these matrixes in the distribution of the congeners, and the coefficients were close to 1 (see figure 1).

Figure 1: PCB concentrations in serum, plasma and whole blood derived from the same blood sample (distributions for three samples shown).

