



An In-Depth Analysis of Water Quality Using GIS and Heavy Metal Pollution Index near a Gold Mining Area, Qorveh, Iran

Mahsa Jahangiri-rad^{1*}, Mohsen Shariati², Mahdih Yaaghoubi³, Ali Haghmoradkhani⁴, Abbas Akbarzadeh⁵

¹ Water Purification Research Center, Tehran Medical Sciences, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

² Department of Environmental Planning, College of Engineering, Faculty of Environment, Management and Education, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran.

³ Department of Environmental Health Engineering, School of Public Health, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran.

⁴ Technical Consultant, Arman Mohit Pak Iranian Company, Environmental Monitoring & Analysis Company (EMACO) Tehran, Iran.

⁵ Water and Wastewater Research Center (WWRC), Water Research Institute, Tehran, Iran.

ARTICLE INFO

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Article History:

Received: 16 August 2021

Accepted: 20 October 2021

*Corresponding Author:

Mahsa Jahangiri-rad

Email:

m.jahangiri@iautmu.ac.ir

Tel:

+9822006660-6

Keywords:

Metals, Heavy, Hydrochemistry, Groundwater, Qorveh City.

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Inappropriate management of mining activities may bring about water pollution and pose a heavy complication on aquatic ecosystem and humans. The study aimed to evaluate the effect of Qorveh gold mining activities on the quality of nearby groundwater.

Materials and Methods: The concentration of seven eco-toxic metals along with some general hydrochemical parameters were investigated for 27 sampling stations in the study area using Atomic Absorption Spectrometry (AAS) and conventional hydrochemical methods. The analysis results were further applied to compute pollution indices, namely heavy metal pollution index (HPI) for irrigation purposes.

Results: The main elements were within the World Health Organization (WHO) and Iranian National Water Standards (INWS) for irrigation water quality, except for NH_4^+ in some sampling points. The concentration of heavy metals followed the order $\text{Cu} > \text{Zn} > \text{Pb} > \text{Hg} > \text{Cd} > \text{As}$. The contents of Hg, As, Cd, and Cu in most sites were higher than the recommended values. Except for two stations, the value of HPI based on the mean concentration was found to be far beyond the critical pollution index value of 100, suggesting that the area is highly polluted with some heavy metals.

Conclusion: Elevated concentration of trace elements found in groundwater of this area represented the release of harmful elements from gold mining activities on surrounding environment.

Citation: Jahangiri-rad M, Shariati M, Yaaghoubi M, et al. *An In-Depth Analysis of Water Quality Using GIS and Heavy Metal Pollution Index near a Gold Mining Area, Qorveh, Iran*. J Environ Health Sustain Dev. 2021; 6(4): 1507-21.

Introduction

Urbanization and industrial development over the last decade have brought about some grave concerns for the environment. Heavy metals contamination is one of the serious quality issues in many fast growing cities, due to the fact that the development of water quality maintenance and

sanitation infrastructure have not complied with population and urbanization growth particularly for the developing countries^{1,2}.

Heavy metals can pose a risk to human health. Eight common heavy metals are arsenic (As), barium (Ba), cadmium (Cd), chromium (Cr), lead (Pb), mercury (Hg), selenium (Se), and silver (Ag).

These are all naturally occurring substances which are often present in the environment at low levels; however, in high doses, they endanger human health³⁻⁵. Heavy metals enter groundwater from various sources; namely natural or anthropogenic⁶. Their natural sources include weathering of metal-bearing rocks and volcanic eruptions⁷, while anthropogenic sources include agricultural and industrial activities, landfilling, mining, and transportation, which all introduce a great amount of heavy metals into groundwater⁸. Mining⁹, disposal of untreated or incompletely treated effluents contain toxic metals¹⁰, as well as metal chelates from assorted industries,¹¹ and undiscerning use of heavy metal-containing fertilizer and pesticides in agricultural fields¹² have been the subjects of many studies addressing the main sources of heavy metal water contamination.

One of the most impetuous environmental Issues related to metal mining activities is acid mine drainage (AMD), which is produced by oxidation of pyrite and other metallic sulphides¹³. Given precious metal found in small quantities, gold mining operations cover wide areas, and thus can cause environmental damage over a geographically vast area. The mining sites are often contaminated with various forms of heavy metals that come primarily from the processing of ores and disposal of tailings and wastewaters around mines¹⁴⁻¹⁶. Owing to the fact that the large amounts of ore have to be removed to get small part of gold, different hazardous chemicals are used as extractive materials. Gold mining can also have devastating effects on water resources in addition to its negative effects on nearby soil and air¹⁷. Toxic mine waste contains dangerous chemicals, including As, cadmium, lead, mercury, petroleum byproducts, acids, and cyanide¹⁸. The toxic effects of these metals, not only cause irreparable damages to ecosystem, but also lead to the devastating impacts on human body and its proper functioning¹⁸.

Due to the use of dirty practices, such as open pit mining and cyanide heap leaching, mining

companies generate roughly 20 tons of toxic waste for every 0.333-ounce gold ring. The waste, usually a gray liquid sludge, is laden with deadly cyanide and toxic heavy metals¹⁹. Many studies conducted on mining activities have focused on heavy metals and cyanide monitoring in the environment²⁰⁻²².

There are a large number of published studies²³⁻²⁵ describing soil contamination of heavy metals near mining areas in Iran. Considering the possible release of noxious substances originating from Qorveh mining activity, potable water supply to the surrounding villages is provided by a water tanker, whilst groundwater is used for irrigation purposes. Limited empirical investigations have been conducted on large scale ground water quality monitoring in relation to Sarigoni gold mine activity located in Qorveh, Iran. The present study aimed to assess the physico-chemical properties of water sources (wells, Qanats, and river) in Qorveh area, west Iran, near a gold mining setting using the HPI approach and correlation analysis.

Materials and Methods

Study area

Qorveh is the capital of Qorveh County, Kurdistan Province, Iran (Figure 1). At the 2019 census, its population was 136961. It is restricted from the north to Bijar, from the east to Hamadan province from south to Hamadan and Kermanshah, and from west to Sanandaj. Its center is the city of Qorveh which is located in a large plain 93 km east of Sanandaj and northwest of Hamadan and has expanded in the direction of Sanandaj road towards Hamadan. Owing to its distinctive geological characteristics and mineral water springs, visitors and tourists are attracted to this city. Qorveh area is known as one of the major gold reservoirs in Iran. Sarigoni gold mine was commissioned in 2015 and works continuously, with eleven tons of gold being extracted each year. The climate of the region is semi-arid continental, very hot, and dry in summer, while cold and wet in winter. The average summer temperature varies from 35 °C in the coldest northern area to 40 °C in the southwest.

Indexing approach

The heavy metal pollution index (HPI) is a ranking technique which provides the mixed effect of individual heavy metal on the overall quality of water. The ranking is a value between zero and one, presenting the relative significance individual quality considerations, which is assessed as inversely proposal to the recommended standard (S_i) for each parameter²⁷. The critical pollution index of HPI value for drinking water reported by Prasad and Bose is 100²⁷. Edet and Offiong classified HPI into three modified scale delimited as low, medium, and high for HPI values < 15, 15–30, and >30, respectively^{28,29}.

The HPI was calculated using Equation 1.

$$HPI = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{i=n} (Q_i \times W_i)}{\sum_{i=1}^{i=n} W_i} \quad (1)$$

Where, Q_i is the sub-index of the i^{th} parameter. W_i is the unit weights of i^{th} parameter, and n is the number of parameters analyzed.

The unit weight W_i was calculated according to Equation 2.

$$W_i = \frac{K}{S_i} \quad (2)$$

Where K and S_i represent the proportionality constant and highest permissible values of i^{th}

parameter, respectively²⁸.

The sub index (Q_i) of the parameter is calculated by Equation 3.

$$Q_i = \sum_{i=1}^{i=n} \frac{|M_i - I|}{S_i - I} \times 100 \quad (3)$$

Where M_i is the tested value of heavy metal of i^{th} parameter, I is the ideal value (maximum desirable value for drinking or agricultural purposes) of the i^{th} parameter and S_i is the standard value (highest permissible value for drinking water) of the i^{th} parameter²⁸. The sign (-) shows numerical difference of the two values, regardless of the algebraic sign.

In the current study, the concentration limits (highest permissible value) for agricultural purposes (S_i) and maximum desirable value (I_i) were taken from the Iran national standard (Standard No. 1053). The highest permissible values for irrigation (S_i) show the maximum allowable concentration in the absence of any substitute water source (Table 1).

The concentration of each tested parameter was converted into HPI. The higher HPI value indicates substantial damage to the environment and health. The critical HPI value is frequently considered 100^{27,28}.

Table 1: Desirable and permissible values for the tested heavy metals

Heavy metals	Maximum desirable value (I)($\mu\text{g/L}$)	Highest permitted value for irrigation (Si)($\mu\text{g/L}$)
Fe	300	5000
Hg	-	1
Zn	-	2000
Cu	50	200
Pb	-	5000
Cr	-	100
Cd	-	10
As	-	100
Se	-	20

Statistical evaluation and spatial distribution

Heavy metals data collected in this study were processed and exhibited on box plots using Graph Pad Prism version 8.0.2. Physiochemical data were summarized as mean, median, range, and

standard deviation for each tested parameters. Statistical analyses were performed with Graph Pad Prism version 8.0.2. Considering the distribution of data, nonparametric spearman correlation was used to assess correlations among

the concentrations of several heavy metals in water samples. The significant difference was considered 0.05. Spatial analysis (IDW interpolation) was performed using ArcGIS 10.2 ESRI software. IDW relies mainly on the inverse of the distance raised to a mathematical power. Since its power of parameter controls the significance of known points on the interpolated values, power of 5 was chosen for densely sampling points^{29, 30}.

Results

General Hydrochemistry

The concentrations of total dissolved solids (TDS) and electrical conductivity (EC) in water samples ranged widely from 112-180 mg/L and 234-1790 µS/cm and exhibited distinct variation between sampling points (Table 2). However, these values all fall within the limit standards of Iranian National Water Standards (INWS). High values of EC shows moderate mineralization of water, indicating long term contact of ground water with

basement. The electrical conductivity of surface water (river) was relatively low for four consecutive months. The pH values varied from 5.18 to 8.13 with a mean value of 7.26 ± 0.57 , revealing fluctuation from acidic to basic characteristic (Table 2). Except for sites Nos. 11 and 23 other samples were basic. Nitrate concentration was highly variable between sampling points ranging from 4.4 to 44 mg/L and it lies within the maximum permissible value of 50 mg/L. Sulfate values varied significantly between sampling points and ranged from 0.7-112 mg/L. However, phosphate concentration varied slightly ranging from 0 to 1.2 mg/L. Considering Se concentration in water samples, no sampling point was recorded beyond the Iranian irrigation water guidelines of 5 µg/L. Water samples from all sites near the mining area were not dominated by cyanide.

Table 2: Results of groundwater physicochemical analysis in the study area

Parameters	Unit	Min	Max	Ave	Med	SD	INWS
EC	µS/cm	234	1790	604.6	495.5	322.7	-
Color	Pt-Co	0	11	1.583	1	2.18	15
pH	-	5.18	8.13	7.26	7.42	0.57	6.5-9
NO ₃ ⁻²	mg/L	4.4	46	18.37	16	9.38	50
SO ₄ ⁻²	mg/L	0.7	112	28.51	22.5	21.31	400
NH ₄ ⁺	mg/L	0.07	2.14	0.59	0.35	0.53	1
TDS	mg/L	112	880	290.9	231	161.5	1500
CN ⁻	mg/L	0.001	0.011	0.004	0.005	0.0026	0.07
PO ₄ ⁻³	mg/L	0	1.2	0.23	0.2	0.19	5
Se	µg/L	<DL	5	0.76	0	1.17	10

DL: Detection Limit

Heavy metals contamination status

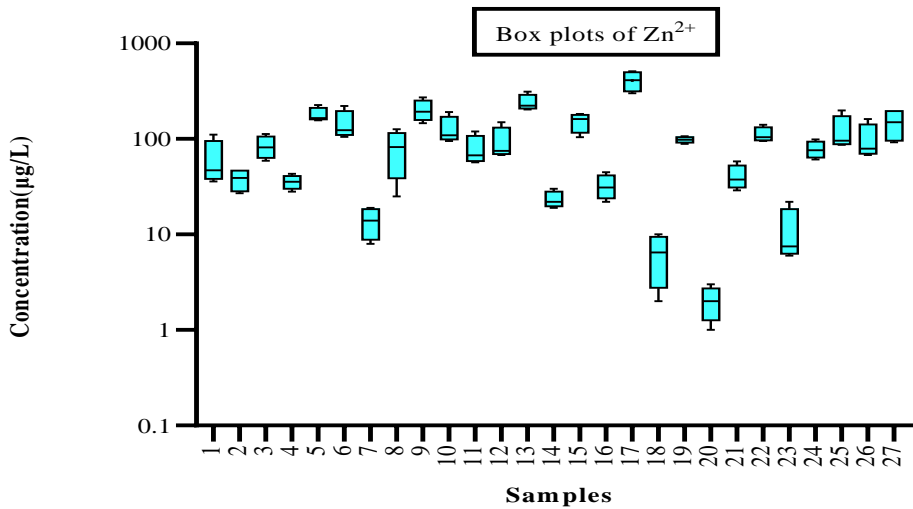
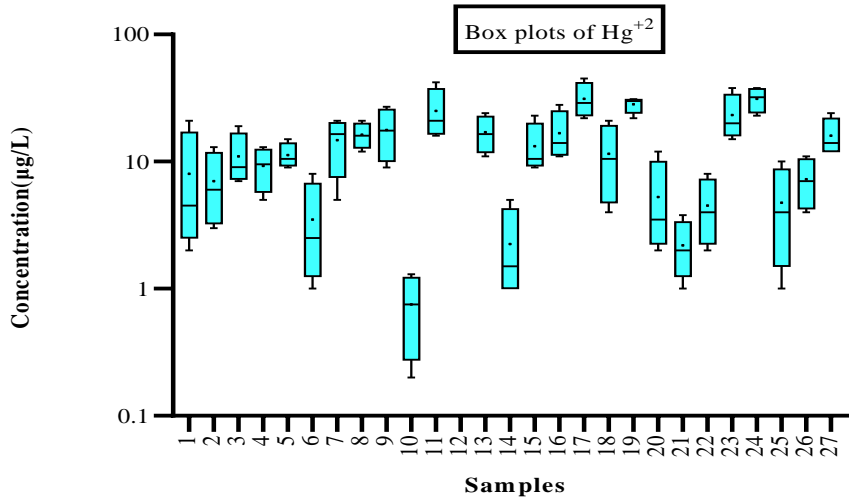
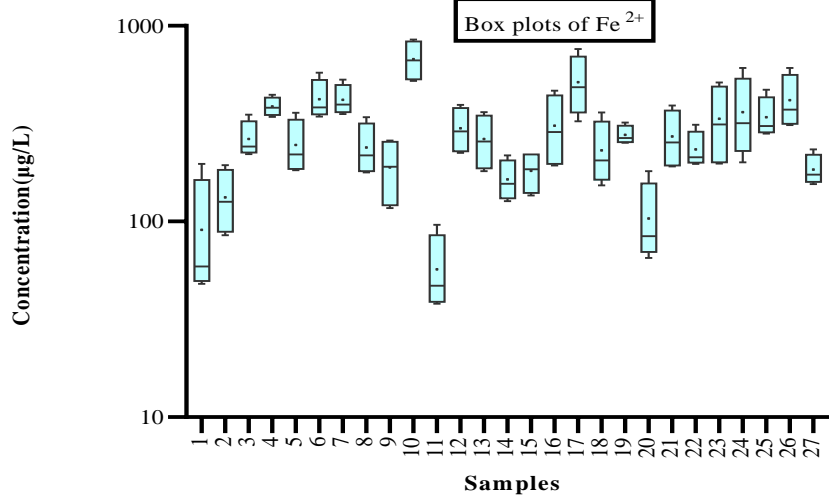
The box plots of heavy metals are provided in Figure 2 (a-h). The samples were taken from 1 river, 7 Qanats and 19 wells. Arsenic, cadmium, copper, iron, selenium, zinc, chromium, and lead were all detected in water samples.

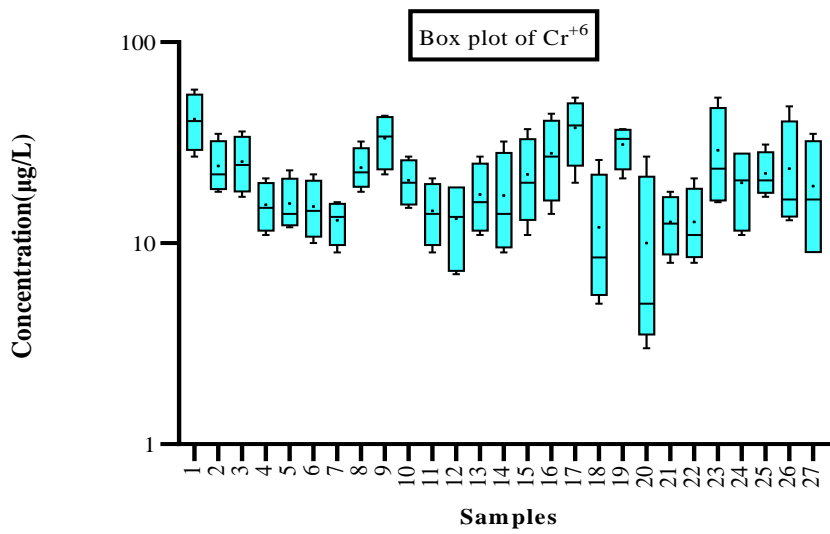
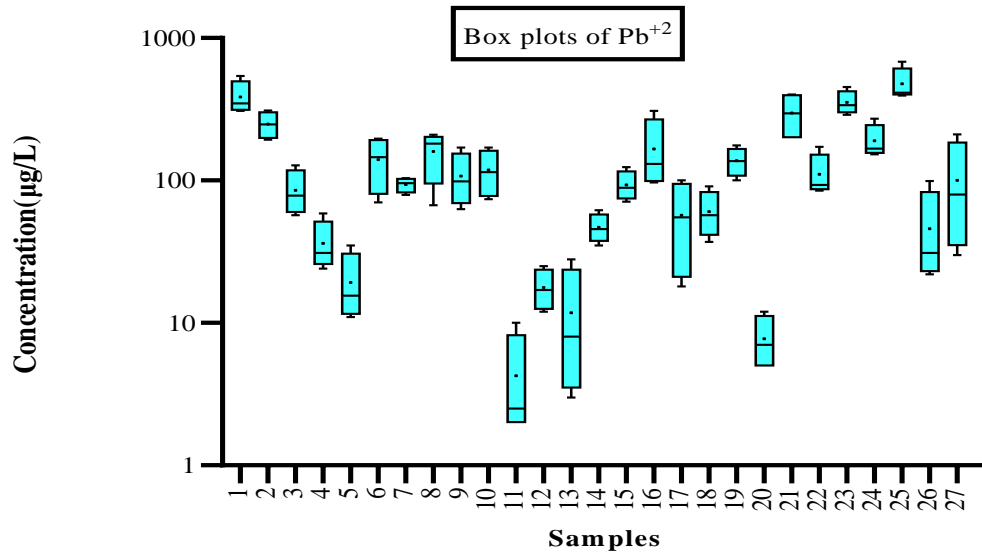
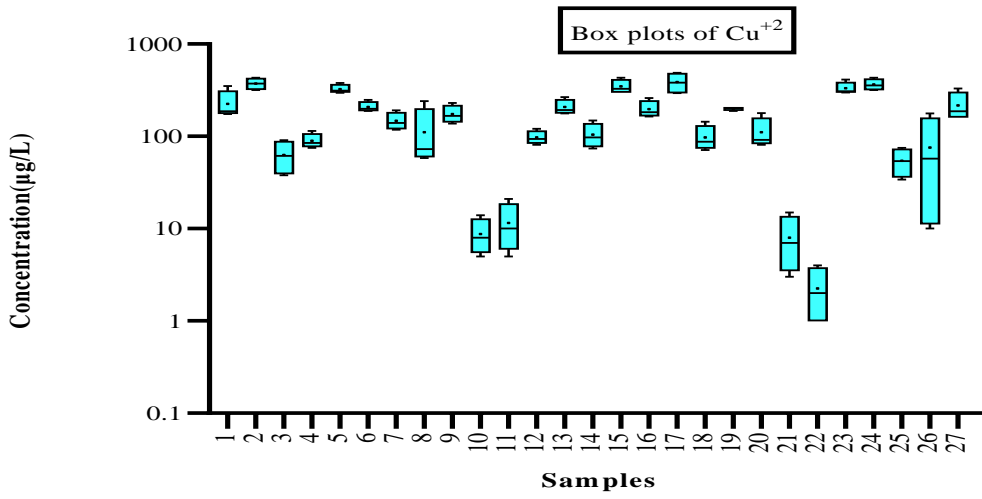
Regarding irrigation purposes, the values of Hg, As, and Cd in almost 100%, 41%, and 85% of the sampling points exceeded the limit of Iranian water guidelines. It is noteworthy that the concentration of lead in none of sampling points was beyond the Iranian water standards for irrigation as the maximum permissible value of Pb is set 5000

µg/L. In general, the concentrations of Hg, Pb, As, and Cd ranged 0.2-45 µg/L (SD ± 10.19), 15-193 µg/L (SD ± 41.45), 2-682 µg/L (SD ± 130.7), and 1-551 µg/L (SD ± 95.73), respectively. Cr concentration was determined between 3-80 µg/L (SD ± 12.76). Cr concentrations were far below the Iranian water standards for irrigation purposes (it's the maximum permissible value is 100 µg/L). The concentrations of Se, Fe, Zn, and Cu were all within the Iranian water quality standards for irrigation purposes. The concentration of these parameters ranged 0-5 (SD ± 1.17), 38-850 (SD ± 163.7), 1-512 (SD ± 91.76), and 1-489 (SD ±

126.8). Surprisingly, the concentration of Cu in almost 41% of sampling sites was much higher

than the critical value of 200 µg/L set for irrigation purposes.





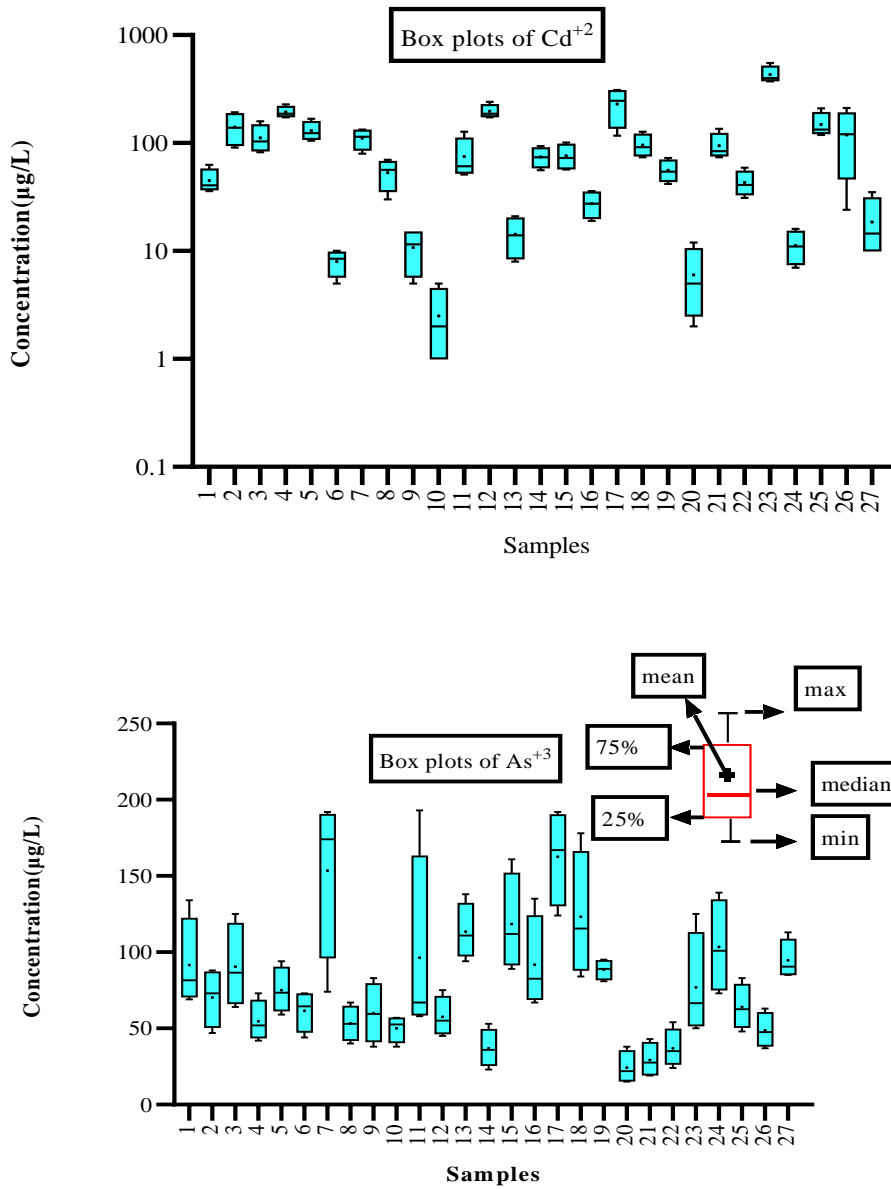


Figure 2: Box plots showing the distribution of metals’ concentration in the groundwater samples

Spatial pattern of HPI

In order to calculate the HPI of the ground water, the mean concentration value of the selected metals was taken into account. The analysis results of HPI for the study area and corresponding spatial distribution are presented in Figures 3 and 1, respectively. The mean HPI values were obtained 898.23, 595.36, and 698.52 for wells, river, and Qanats, respectively. The maximum value of HPI was (1989.60) found at the sampling location No 23 (Figure 1). However,

the lowest HPI value was observed in well No 10 which is located completely far from mining site. Considering the classes of HPI, 2 locations were under the critical HPI value of 100 (Nos 26 and 10), while remaining stations were in high class. In general, HPI values indicated that almost all groundwater were critically polluted with heavy metals; since most of sampling points exhibited HPI values far beyond 100. It was also found that the far from the gold mine the less the value of HPI (Figure 1). A significant increase in the value

of HPI was observed at the sampling points (11, 17, 19, 23, and 24) compared to other sampling locations, which could be attributed to

superbly values of As, Cd, and Hg; their corresponding spatial concentrations are depicted in Figure 2.

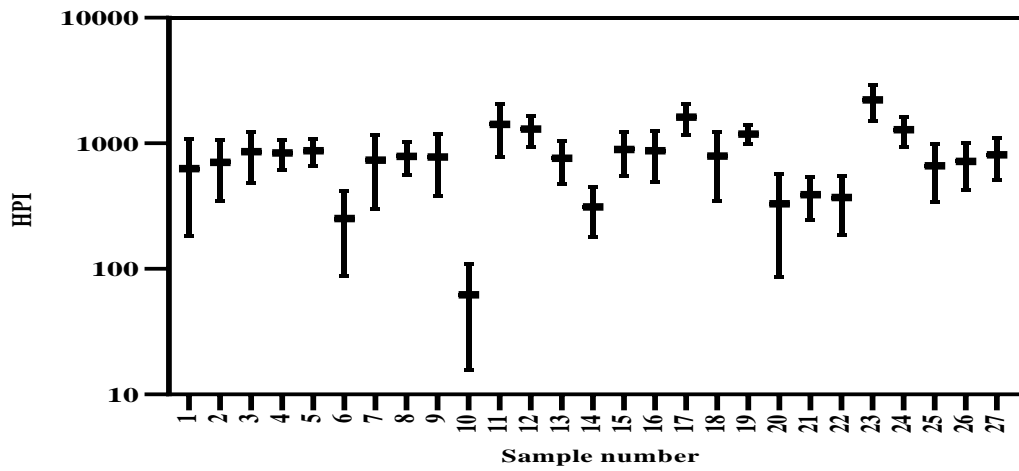


Figure 3: Statistical analysis results of HPI for the study area

Correlation analysis

The matrix correlation was analyzed in the case of heavy metals and CN-. According to Figure 4, a nonparametric spearman correlation analysis was performed on the concentrations of eight heavy metals and CN-. Significantly positive relationships

($p < 0.05$) existed between Hg - As ($r = 0.7$), Cr - Pb ($r = 0.53$), and Hg - Cu ($r = 0.53$). Besides, relatively weak positive relationships with high significance ($p < 0.05$) were observed between As - Cu ($r = 0.5$), possibly indicating similarity in their sources in water.

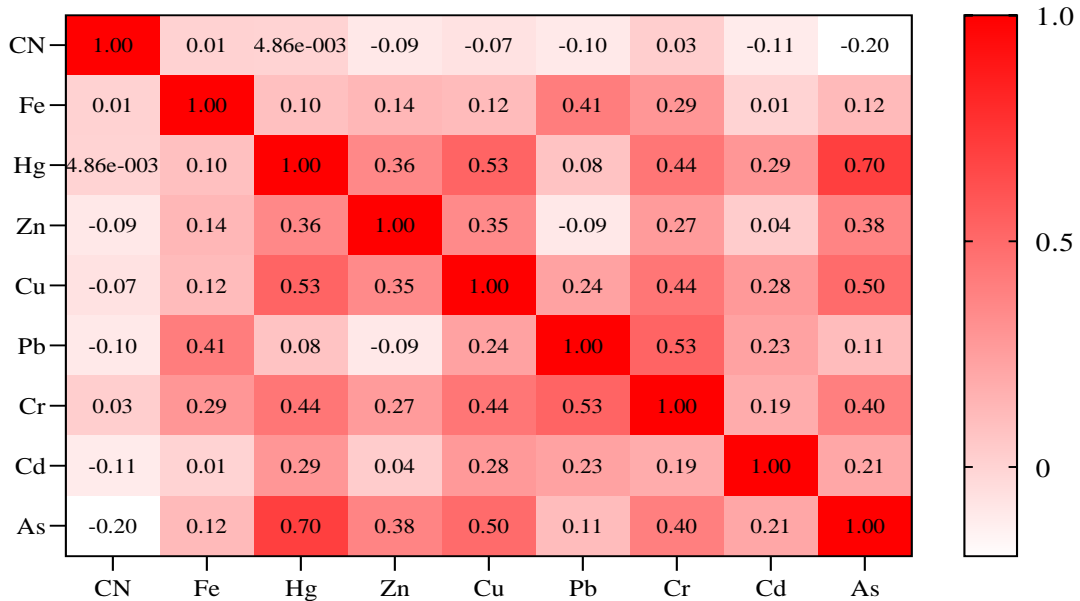


Figure 4: Correlation matrix of tested parameters in groundwater samples of Sarigoni mining areas

Discussion

The pH values observed in Qorveh were generally higher than those observed in another study by Mitileni et al.³³ who reported pH values of 3.25- 6.28 in the vicinity of gold mine in South Africa. Numerous authors have documented highly acidic pH values in AMD emerging from gold mine activities^{34, 35}. However, Rafiei et al. (2010) demonstrated mean pH value of 7.35 in gold mine tailings in Iran²³. With respect to the maximum permissible limits, none of the samples demonstrated excessive values of color, nitrate, sulfate, and phosphate. These basic pH values could be attributed to oil spills or leakages from excavation machinery and transportation vehicles^{31, 32}. It is claimed that low SO_4^{2-} contents in groundwater indicates sulfate reduction process in the aquifer system^{36, 37}. Moreover, this result support previous research, linking enhanced sulfate values with lower pH. It is assumed that gold mine tailings comprises of up to 6% pyrite and this high sulphides content leads to high acidity in groundwater near the gold mines³⁸. pH values obtained in the current study (5.40–8.84) did not elevate oxidation of metal sulphides, such as arsenopyrite (FeAsS), pyrite (FeS_2), which are mostly shaped at pH 3.6-5.7³⁹. Moreover, 25% of the samples had excessive concentration concerning NH_4^+ . Some evidence has demonstrated high ammonium concentration in the vicinity of gold mine activities; since solutions containing ammonia are particularly effective for extracting gold from refractory ores^{39, 40}. In fact, the CN^- concentration in the study area was within the permissible values and may be directly linked to artisanal small-scale mining (semi-mechanized manner) from gold processing (Cyanidation process), which comprises of leaching gold from ore as a gold-cyanide complex and recovering gold by precipitation⁴¹. A sodium cyanide solution is commonly used to selectively leach gold. It easily combines with many metals like gold and aids in its separation from ore⁴². Similarly, Osamn et al. (2010) found low concentration of CN^- below the detection limit of 5 ppb in groundwater near Yanqul mine of Oman. They concluded

volatilization of CN^- (converted to HCN), lined dam structure, high evapotranspiration rate and deeper water table, contributed to the absence of cyanide in groundwater⁴³. The CN^- concentration in the present study is low and may be also attributed to intermittent release from gold mining activities. The observations in Qorveh reflected the effect of various land uses, especially mining activities, which are associated with the inflow of both mine drainage and sewage from mining areas.

These results are similar to those reported by Dorleku et al. who performed a similar series of experiments and found high values of the mentioned heavy metals in groundwater of small scale gold mine⁴⁴. Hg release from gold mining activities has caused great damage to the environment. In line with the present study, previous studies have demonstrated Hg as one of the threat to environment from gold mining activities⁴⁵. It is proposed that for almost every gram of gold produced, two grams of inorganic Hg are released into the environment, which are further converted into organic forms⁴⁶. Hg is extremely harmful to human health. The amount of vapor released by mining activities has been proven to damage the kidneys, liver, brain, heart, lungs, colon, and immune system. Chronic exposure to Hg may conclude in fatigue, losing weight, tremors, and shifts in behavior. In children and developing fetuses, Hg can impair neurological development⁴⁵. There have been a number of longitudinal studies involving groundwater contamination with As in gold mining areas⁴⁷. It can be seen in forms of arsenopyrite (FeSAs), orpimrnt (As_2S_3), and realgar (As_2S_2) in gold bearing rock⁴⁷. Previous research has established high values of As in Obuasi region originated from arsenopyrite in the gold-bearing ore⁴⁸. Predominant configuration of As in mine tailings are arsenite⁴⁸ and arsenate⁴⁹ which both exhibit the highest toxicity. Background concentration of Cd in unpolluted soil is roughly 1 mg/kg; however, in gold mine tailings, concentration of up to 11.7 mg/kg has been reported^{49, 50}. The isometric form of Cd is observed in gold bearing orebodies in sphalerite

which controls its concentration in the ore body⁵⁰. Copper is amply found in sulphides, arsenites, chloride, and carbonates forms in gold ores⁵². Despite the natural background level of 5-70 mg/Kg in unpolluted soil samples, elevated concentration of Cu has been observed in gold mine tailings. Copper tends to bind to particles of organic matter and clay minerals upon its release to the environment⁵³. Utterly, Hg and Cd were the predominant compounds with the highest values in water samples; whereas Se accounted for a minor concentration compared to all the detected heavy metals and in many sites its values were below the limit of detection. Except for Se, concentration of heavy metals displayed fundamental variations in various months especially for lead (Pb), chromium (Cr), and cadmium (Cd). Changes in most heavy metals concentrations were also observed among sampling points; sites Nos, 6, 10, and 20 exhibited lower heavy metals contents compared to others. The high level of heavy metals in ground water is consistent with a previous study that considerable concentration of metals were detected in water samples near mines⁵⁴⁻⁵⁶. The outermost concentration of Hg, As, and Cd were observed at sampling sites 11, 17, and 23. Likewise, exceptionally high detected levels of Cu were observed in sampling sites 2, 5, 15, and 17, which outlined against the Iranian high permissible values. The detected concentrations in this study were higher than or similar to those previously reported in published studies⁵⁷⁻⁵⁹.

Despite the great distance of sampling points 23 and 24 from the mine site, high HPI values were observed, which may be related to other anthropogenic factors like agricultural activities and wastewater discharge^{1, 60, 61}. Compared to other environmental samples, the levels of heavy metals in this study were one to two orders of magnitude higher than those found in water from citizens well, soils or vegetables in the vicinity of gold mines⁵⁹, implying that the level of heavy metals in groundwater samples of Qorveh was relatively high. In this study, the exceptionally high amounts of heavy metals in groundwater

raised concern; since they are the major source of irrigation water in Qorveh province.

Although some of these elements can be derived from geological units, their high concentration can be attributed to the contribution of anthropogenic activities. The correlation among metals can provide information on the source and pathways of metals⁶²⁻⁶⁴. Generally, the tailings from gold extraction and chemical products used during gold separation are the predominant source of heavy metals in water^{65,66}. No significant correlation was observed between CN^- and other heavy metals, probably reflecting different sources and consumption practices of these heavy metals in Qorveh.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to monitor some of heavy metals and general physico-chemical parameters in the surface and groundwater of Sarigoni gold mine, Qorveh province, using HPI and GIS techniques. Out of the seven heavy metals analyzed in 27 sampling sites, the concentrations of As, Hg, Cd, and Cu were above the maximum permissible levels for irrigation. The high concentration of these noxious elements was probably due to the erosion of mining waste (tailings) and the release of wastewater from gold washing into the surrounding environment. The physical parameters (pH, EC, and color) as well as the concentrations of major chemicals in water were all within the INWS for irrigation purposes. HPI was calculated for each sampling site and also mean HPI by taking values for each station during 4 consecutive months in order to compare the heavy metal pollution spatial distribution and assess the quality of water for irrigation purposes. According to the result, it can be concluded that the pollution load at 2 sampling sites was below the critical index limit of 100 and other samples were found to be high and hence unacceptable. For future research, it is imperative that further work be set out to examine the accumulation of the mentioned heavy metals in agricultural crops and to evaluate their possible health risks for human health. Additionally, the result of this study also

cause for alarm due to the resulting adverse health effects of gold mining activities on human health via soil and air transportation of heavy metals. Thus, urgent action by policymakers is required to combat the devastating impacts of the mining activities. Importantly, environmental and health studies should be carried out on the gold mining activities even in other regions of Iran.

Abbreviations

HPI: Heavy metals pollution index
 WHO: World Health Organization
 AMD: Acid mine drainage
 IDW: Inverse distance weighted
 TDS: Total dissolved solids
 EC: Electrical conductivity
 AAS: Atomic absorption spectrometry

Acknowledgements

The authors gratefully acknowledge Water Purification research Center for their support in conducting the study.

Funding

This research was performed in Arman Mohit Pak Iranian Company.

Conflict of interest

No conflict of interest.

This is an Open-Access article distributed in accordance with the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license, which permits others to distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon this work for commercial use.

References

1. Akoto O, Bruce T, Darko D. Heavy metals pollution profiles in streams serving the Owabi reservoir. *Afr J Environ Sci Technol.* 2008; 2(11): 354-9.
2. Ahmad M, Islam S, Rahman S, et al. Heavy metals in water, sediment and some fishes of Buriganga River, Bangladesh. *Int J Environ Res Public Health.* 2010;4(2):321-32.
3. Martin S, Griswold W. Human health effects of heavy metals. *Environmental Science and Technology Briefs for Citizens.* 2009;15:1-6.
4. Jaishankar M, Tseten T, Anbalagan N, et al. Toxicity, mechanism and health effects of some heavy metals. *Interdiscip Toxicol.* 2014;7(2):60-72.
5. Mahurpawar M. Effects of heavy metals on human health. *Int J Res Granthaalayah.* 2015;3(9):2394-3629.
6. Adaikpoh E, Nwajei G, Ogala, J. Heavy metals concentrations in coal and sediments from river Ekulu in Enugu, Coal City of Nigeria. *J Appl Sci Environ Manag.* 2005;9(3):5-8.
7. Williams S, Simpson H, Olsen C, et al. Sources of heavy metals in sediments of the Hudson river estuary. *Mar Chem.* 1978;6(3):195-213.
8. Wang Z, Hong C, Xing Y, et al. Spatial distribution and sources of heavy metals in natural pasture soil around copper-molybdenum mine in Northeast China. *Ecotoxicol Environ Saf.* 2018;154:329-36.
9. Penido ES, Martins GC, Mendes TBM, et al. Combining biochar and sewage sludge for immobilization of heavy metals in mining soils. *Ecotoxicol Environ Saf.* 2019;172:326-33.
10. Barakat M. New trends in removing heavy metals from industrial wastewater. *Arab J chem.* 2011;4(4):361-77.
11. Fisher A, Goodall PS, Hinds MW, et al. Atomic spectrometry update. *Industrial analysis: metals, chemicals and advanced materials. J Anal At Spectrom.* 2003;18(8):1497-528.
12. Salman S, Elnazer A, El Nazer H. Integrated mass balance of some heavy metals fluxes in Yaakob village, south Sohag, Egypt. *Int J Environ Sci Technol.* 2010;14(5),1011-8.
13. Nordstrom DK. Advances in the hydrogeochemistry and microbiology of acid mine waters. *Int Geol Rev.* 2000;42(6):499-515.
14. Franco-Hernandez MO, Vásquez-Murrieta M, Patiño-Siciliano A, et al. Heavy metals concentration in plants growing on mine tailings in Central Mexico. *Bioresour Technol.* 2010;101(11):3864-9.
15. Wei W, Ma R, Sun Z, et al. Effects of mining activities on the release of heavy metals (HMs) in a typical mountain headwater region, the

- Qinghai-Tibet Plateau in China. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2018;15(9):1987.
16. Sulaiman M, Salawu K, Barambu A. Assessment of concentrations and ecological risk of heavy metals at resident and remediated soils of uncontrolled mining site at Dareta Village, Zamfara, Nigeria. *J Appl Sci Environ Manag*. 2019;23(1):187–93.
 17. Kraft C, Von Tuempling JW, Zachmann DW. The effects of mining in Northern Romania on the heavy metal distribution in sediments of the rivers Szamos and Tisza (Hungary). *Acta Hydrochim Hydrobiol*. 2006;34:257-64.
 18. Hudson-Edwards KA, Jamieson HE, Lottermoser BG. Mine wastes: past, present, future. *Elements*. 2011;7(6):375-80.
 19. Islam R, Hye MA. Metallurgical treatment processes of metals (Fe and Steel, Al, Cu, Au) and their detrimental environmental issues-A mini review. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*. 2018;8(5):677-91.
 20. Eisler R, Wiemeyer SN. Cyanide hazards to plants and animals from gold mining and related water issues. *Rev Environ Contam Toxicol*. 2004;183:21-54.
 21. Brüger A, Fafilek G, Rojas-Mendoza L. On the volatilisation and decomposition of cyanide contaminations from gold mining. *Sci Total Environ*. 2018;627:1167-73.
 22. Nriagu JO. Mercury pollution from the past mining of gold and silver in the Americas. *Sci Total Environ*. 1994;149(3):167-81.
 23. Rafiei B, Bakhtiarinezhad M, Hashemi M, et al. Distribution of heavy metals around the Dashkasan Au mine. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2010;4(4):647-54.
 24. Nasiri A, Tavakkoli J. Assessing the role of mining in ghorveh county on the sustainability of surrounding villages. *Geogr Environ Sustain*. 2020;36:1-15
 25. Nezhad MTK, Tali MG, Mahmoudi MH, et al. Assessment of As and Cd contamination in topsoils of Northern Ghorveh (Western Iran): role of parent material, land use and soil properties. *Environ Earth Sci*. 2011;64(5): 1203-13.
 26. Federation WE, APH Association. Standard methods for the examination of water and wastewater. American Public Health Association. Washington, DC, USA. 2005.
 27. Prasad B, Bose J. Evaluation of the heavy metal pollution index for surface and spring water near a limestone mining area of the lower Himalayas. *J environ geol*. 2001;41:183-8.
 28. Mohan SV, Nithila P, Reddy SJ. Estimation of heavy metals in drinking water and development of heavy metal pollution index. *J Environ Sci Health A*. 1996;31(2):283-9.
 29. Edet A, Offiong O. Evaluation of water quality pollution indices for heavy metal contamination monitoring. A study case from Akpabuyo-Odukpani area, Lower Cross River Basin (southeastern Nigeria). *Geo Journal*. 2002;57:295-304.
 30. Scott LM, Janikas MV. Spatial statistics in ArcGIS: Handbook of Applied Spatial Analysis: Springer; 2010.
 31. Ahiale E, Serfoh-Armah Y, Kortatsi B. Hydrochemical analysis of groundwater in the lower Pra Basin of Ghana. *Water Resour Prot*. 2010;2:864-71.
 32. Mall I, Diaw M, Dieng NM, et al. Evaluation of water resources quality in Sabodala gold mining region and its surrounding area (Senegal). *Water Resour Prot*. 2015;7(3):247-63.
 33. Mitileni C, Gumbo J, Muzerengi C, et al. The distribution of toxic metals in sediments: Case study of new union gold mine tailings, Limpopo, South Africa. *Mine Water-Managing the Challenges; IMWA: Aachen, Germany*. 2011; 609-14.
 34. Naicker K, Cukrowska E, McCarth T. Acid mine drainage arising from gold mining activity in Johannesburg, South Africa and environs. *Environ Pollut*. 2003;122(1):29-40.
 35. Tutu H, McCarthy T, Cukrowska E. The chemical characteristics of acid mine drainage with particular reference to sources, distribution and remediation: the Witwatersrand Basin, South Africa as a case study. *J Appl Geochem*. 2008; 23(12):3666-84.

36. Yamanaka M, Nakano T, Tase N. Sulfate reduction and sulfide oxidation in anoxic confined aquifers in the northeastern Osaka Basin, Japan. *J Hydrol.* 2007;335(1-2): 55-67.
37. Miao Z, Brusseau M, Carroll KC, et al. Sulfate reduction in groundwater: characterization and applications for remediation. *Environ Geochem Health.* 2012;34(4):539-50.
38. Vega FA, Covelo EF, Andrade M. Competitive sorption and desorption of heavy metals in mine soils: influence of mine soil characteristics. *J Colloid Interface Sci.* 2006;298(2):582-92.
39. Lewis AE. Review of metal sulphide precipitation. *Hydrometallurgy.* 2010;104:222-34.
40. Han KN, Meng X. Ammonia extraction of gold and silver from ores and other materials. U.S. Patent 5114687, 1994.
41. Jdid E, Blazy P. *Métallurgie de L'or-Procédés. Techniques de L'ingénieur.* 2006;1:16.
42. Soldán P, Pavonič M, Bouček J, et al. Baia Mare accident-brief ecotoxicological report of Czech experts. *Ecotoxicol Environ Saf.* 2001;49(3):255-61.
43. Abdalla OA, Suliman F, Al-Ajmi H, et al. Cyanide from gold mining and its effect on groundwater in arid areas, Yanqul mine of Oman. *Environ Earth Sci.* 2010;60(4):885-92.
44. Dorleku MK, Nukpezah D, Carboo, D. Effects of small-scale gold mining on heavy metal levels in groundwater in the Lower Pra Basin of Ghana. *Appl Water Sci.* 2018;8:126 .
45. Mphinyane A. Geological related acid mine drainage of gold tailings and coal waste materials: A comparative study. North-West University (South Africa). 2018. Potchefstroom Campus.2018.
46. Counter SA, Buchanan LH. Mercury exposure in children: a review. *Toxicol Appl Pharmacol.* 2004;198(2):209-30.
47. Nriagu J, Bhattacharya P, Mukherjee A, et al. Arsenic in soil and groundwater: an overview. *Trace Metals and other Contaminants in the Environment.* 2007;9:3-60.
48. Ahmad K, Carboo D. Speciation of As (III) and As (V) in some Ghanaian gold tailings by a simple distillation method. *Water Air Soil Pollut.* 2000;122:317-26.
49. Bernard K, Duker A. Assessing the spatial distribution of arsenic concentration from goldmine for environmental management at Obuasi, Ghana. Netherlands: International Institute for Geoinformation Sciences and Earth Observation: Enschede. 2007.
50. Karthikeyan P, Marigoudar SR, Mohan D, et al. Prescribing sea water quality criteria for arsenic, cadmium and lead through species sensitivity distribution. *Ecotoxicol Environ Saf.* 2021;208:111612.
51. Brusseau ML, Artiola J. Chemical contaminants. In *Environmental and pollution science.* (Elsevier), 2019;175-90.
52. Bempah CK, Ewusi A, Obiri-Yeboah S, et al. Distribution of arsenic and heavy metals from mine tailings dams at Obuasi Municipality of Ghana. *Am J Eng Res.* 2013;2:61-70.
53. Ranjard L, Echairi A, Nowak V, et al. Field and microcosm experiments to evaluate the effects of agricultural Cu treatment on the density and genetic structure of microbial communities in two different soils. *FEMS Microbiol Ecol.* 2006;58(2):303-15.
54. Tan M, Wang K, Xu Z, et al. Study on heavy metal contamination in high water table coal mining subsidence ponds that use different resource reutilization methods. *Water.* 2020;12:3348.
55. Razo I, Carrizales L, Castro J, et al. Arsenic and heavy metal pollution of soil, water and sediments in a semi-arid climate mining area in Mexico. *Water Air Soil Pollut.* 2004;152:129-52.
56. Nadmitov B, Hong S, Kang SI, et al. Large-scale monitoring and assessment of metal contamination in surface water of the Selenga River Basin (2007–2009). *Environ Sci Pollut Res.* 2015;22(4):2856-67.
57. Thorslund J, Jarsjö J, Chalov SR, et al. Gold mining impact on riverine heavy metal transport in a sparsely monitored region: the upper Lake

- Baikal Basin case. *J environ monit.* 2012;14(10): 2780-92.
58. Abdul-Wahab S, Marikar F. The environmental impact of gold mines: pollution by heavy metals. *Open Eng.* 2012;2:304-13.
59. Fayiga AO, Zhou Q. Effects of plant arsenic uptake and heavy metals on arsenic distribution in an arsenic-contaminated soil. *Environ Pollut.* 2007;147(3):737-42.
60. Shifaw E. Review of heavy metals pollution in China in agricultural and urban soils. *J Health Pollut.* 2018;8(18):180607.
61. Pratap A, Mani FS, Prasad S. Heavy metals contamination and risk assessment in sediments of Laucala Bay, Suva, Fiji. *Mar Pollut Bull.* 2020;156:111238.
62. Marina P, Snežana M, Maja N, et al. Determination of heavy metal concentration and correlation analysis of turbidity: a case study of the Zlot source (Bor, Serbia). *Water Air Soil Pollut.* 2020;231:1-12.
- 63- Rafiee M, Jahangiri-rad M. Risk assessment of heavy metal hotspots in surface water bodies: a case study of Zanzan province, Iran. *Arch Hyg Sci.* 2019;8(3):202-14.
- 64- Rafiee M, Eslami A, Saeedi R, et al. Multivariate and geostatistical analysis of spatial distribution and potential sources of heavy metals in surface waters. *Casp J Environ Sci.* 2019;17(1):23-41.
65. Fashola MO, Ngole-Jeme VM, Babalola O. Heavy metal pollution from gold mines: environmental effects and bacterial strategies for resistance. *Int J Environ Res Public Health.* 2016;13(11):1047.
66. Pahimi H, Panda CR, Ngassoum MB, et al. Environmental impacts of mining in the volcano-sedimentary basins of cameroon: case study of artisanal gold mine tailings (Betare Oya, East-Cameroon). *Int J Energy Environ Eng.* 2015;2:5-15.