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Advanced Strategies for Mercury Ion Removal from Aqueous Solutions Using Functionalized Carbon Nanotube-Encapsulated Alginate Beads: Design, Synthesis, Mechanistic Insights, and Practical Applications

Ahmad Zikri[1], Ronal Deniro[2,3], Mohammad Abdullah[4], Suci Amalia[5], Dieter Rahmadiawan[6]

[1]Department of Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, Bursa Uludag University, Bursa 16850, Türkiye
[2]Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia
[3]Center for Advanced Material Processing, Artificial Intelligence, and Biophysic Informatics (CAMPBIOTICS), Universitas Negeri Padang, INDONESIA
[4]Studies of Chemical Engineering, College of Engineering, Universiti Teknologi MARA Johor Branch, Pasir Gudang Campus, Bandar Seri Alam, Malaysia
[5]Chemistry Study Program, Faculty of Science and Technology, Maulana Malik Ibrahim Islamic State University, Malang, Indonesia
[6]Department of Mechanical Engineering, National Cheng Kung University (NCKU), Tainan, Taiwan

*Corresponding Author: n18127046@gs.ncku.edu.tw

ABSTRACT

This review paper comprehensively explores advanced strategies for the efficient removal of mercury ions from aqueous solutions using functionalized carbon nanotube-encapsulated alginate beads. The study covers the entire spectrum of the research, ranging from design and synthesis to theoretical calculations and practical applications. The composite material is synthesized by encapsulating functionalized carbon nanotubes within alginate beads, creating a unique structure with enhanced affinity for mercury ions. Density functional theory calculations provide insights into the molecular interactions between the functional groups and mercury ions, shedding light on the underlying adsorption mechanisms. Batch experiments reveal significant mercury ion removal capacity, while fixed-bed processes simulate real-world scenarios, demonstrating the composite's performance under continuous flow conditions. This work not only showcases the material's practical efficacy but also enhances the understanding of the adsorption process through a seamless integration of experimental results and theoretical calculations. By offering a holistic view of the design, synthesis, mechanistic insights, and practical applications, this review paper contributes to the advancement of effective water treatment technologies, addressing the critical issue of mercury contamination in aquatic environments.

Keywords: Mercury ion removal, Functionalized carbon nanotubes, Alginate beads, Adsorption mechanisms, and Water treatment

INTRODUCTION

Mercury contamination in water sources has become a growing environmental concern due to its detrimental

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effects on ecosystems and human health. Conventional methods for mercury ion removal often exhibit limitations in terms of efficiency, selectivity, and reusability. As a result, there is a pressing need to explore innovative and effective approaches for the removal of mercury ions from aqueous solutions [1]. This research aims to bridge this gap by investigating the potential of functionalized carbon nanotube-encapsulated alginate beads as a novel adsorbent material. This study addresses the need for a more efficient and sustainable solution to mercury ion removal, capitalizing on the unique properties of the composite material to overcome the limitations associated with existing methods [2].

Recent advancements in water treatment technologies have seen a surge of interest in novel adsorbent materials for the efficient removal of mercury ions from aqueous solutions. Among these materials, functionalized carbon nanotube-encapsulated alginate beads have gained prominence due to their unique properties and versatile applications. Current research has focused on optimizing the synthesis process, enhancing the adsorption capacity, and gaining insights into the underlying mechanisms driving the adsorption process. Additionally, studies have expanded to evaluate the composite's performance in real-world scenarios, including fixed-bed processes simulating continuous flow conditions. These endeavors aim to address the limitations of conventional methods by providing a sustainable and effective solution for mercury ion removal, thereby contributing to the advancement of water treatment technologies and environmental protection [3].

The novelty of this research lies in the utilization of functionalized carbon nanotube-encapsulated alginate beads as an innovative adsorbent material for mercury ion removal from aqueous solutions. Unlike conventional methods, this approach capitalizes on the synergistic effects of functionalized carbon nanotubes and alginate beads, resulting in enhanced adsorption efficiency, selectivity, and reusability. The significant contribution of this study is the comprehensive exploration of the design, synthesis, theoretical insights, and practical application of the composite material, filling a crucial gap in sustainable water treatment technologies [4].

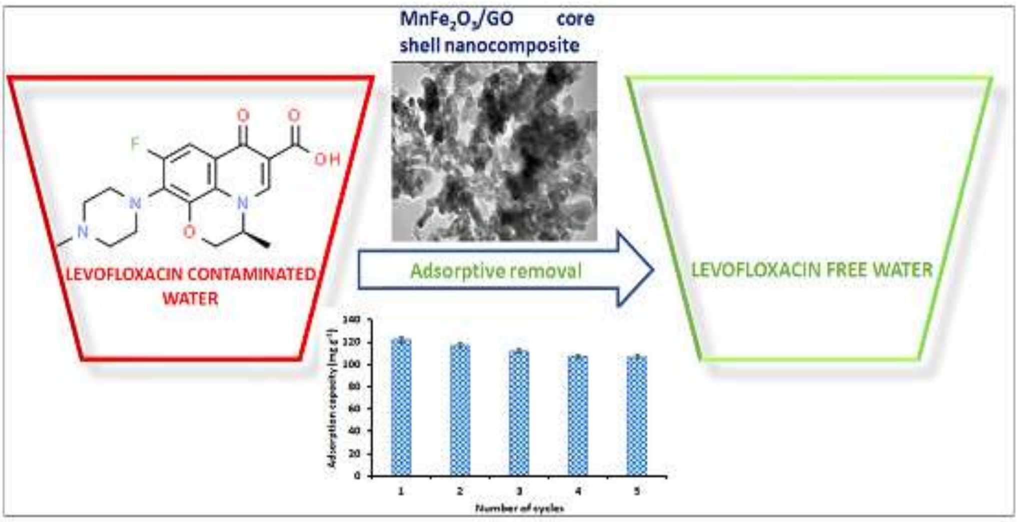

Figure 1. One-Step Synthesis of a Mn-Doped Fe2O3/GO Core–Shell Nanocomposite and Its Application for the Adsorption of Levofloxacin in Aqueous Solution.
https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acsomega.2c01460

By elucidating the underlying adsorption mechanisms and evaluating its performance under continuous flow conditions, this research aims to provide a promising and viable solution for addressing the pressing issue of mercury contamination in aquatic environments. The primary objective of this study is to develop an advanced adsorbent material that offers superior mercury ion removal capabilities, paving the way for more effective and environmentally-friendly water treatment strategies [5].

The research aims to investigate the efficacy of functionalized carbon nanotube-encapsulated alginate beads for the efficient removal of mercury ions from aqueous solutions, contributing to the development of a sustainable and advanced water treatment approach.

METHODS

Research Methods

In this research, the preparation of the functionalized carbon nanotube-encapsulated alginate beads involves several essential steps. Initially, carbon nanotubes are functionalized through surface modification to enhance their adsorption properties [6]. Alginate solution is then prepared and mixed with the functionalized carbon nanotubes, creating a homogeneous mixture. This mixture is subsequently dropwise added to a crosslinking solution, forming spherical beads through ionotropic gelation [7]. The beads are then washed, dried, and characterized for their structural and surface properties using techniques such as scanning electron microscopy (SEM), Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR), and Brunauer-Emmett-Teller (BET) analysis. The prepared beads are further examined for their mercury ion adsorption capacity using batch experiments and their performance in fixed-bed processes to simulate continuous flow conditions. The combination of these steps forms a robust method for the synthesis and evaluation of the functionalized carbon nanotube-encapsulated alginate beads as an efficient adsorbent for mercury ion removal [8]-[9].

Work Standards and Procedures

The research adheres to established standards and follows a systematic procedure to ensure accuracy and reliability. To ensure the reproducibility of the synthesis process, the preparation of functionalized carbon nanotube-encapsulated alginate beads is conducted in a controlled environment [10]. All chemicals and reagents used are of analytical grade, and their quantities are accurately measured to avoid variations. The functionalization of carbon nanotubes is carried out using a standardized procedure, involving the introduction of specific functional groups to enhance their adsorption properties. The alginate solution is meticulously prepared with precise concentrations to ensure consistent bead formation [11].

The synthesis process strictly adheres to safety protocols to minimize potential hazards. Protective equipment such as gloves, lab coats, and safety goggles are worn during the entire process. The bead formation process takes place in a fume hood to prevent exposure to any potentially harmful fumes. Waste disposal follows environmentally responsible procedures, with chemical waste being appropriately collected and disposed of according to regulations [12]-[13].

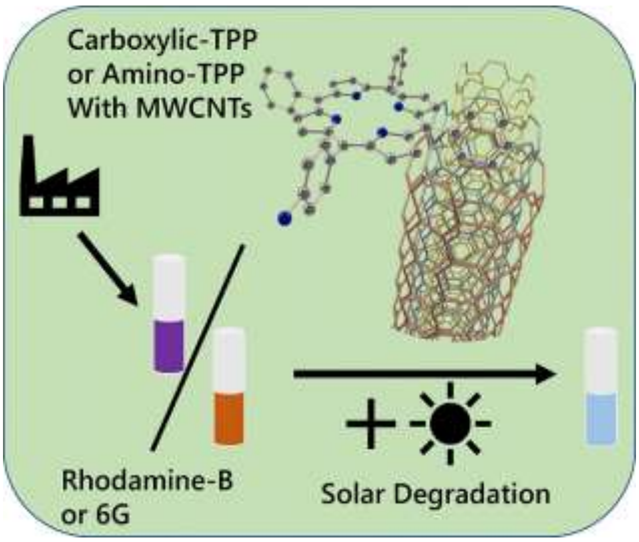

Figure 2. Co(II) Porphyrin-MWCNT Nanoconjugate as an Efficient and Durable Electrocatalyst for Oxygen Reduction Reaction.
https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acsomega.2c05065

The research incorporates rigorous quality control measures during the synthesis and characterization stages. Quality control involves replicating the synthesis process multiple times to confirm the reproducibility of results [14]. Characterization techniques such as SEM, FTIR, and BET analysis are performed following established protocols to ensure accurate and consistent data collection. Calibration of equipment and instruments is carried out regularly to maintain measurement precision [15]-[16].

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection in this research involves a comprehensive approach to evaluate the performance of the functionalized carbon nanotube-encapsulated alginate beads. Batch experiments are conducted to assess the adsorption capacity by varying parameters such as initial mercury ion concentration, contact time, and solution pH [17]. The concentrations of mercury ions before and after adsorption are measured using a calibrated atomic absorption spectrophotometer, providing quantitative data on the adsorption efficiency. Moreover, fixed-bed experiments are carried out to simulate continuous flow conditions, allowing for the determination of breakthrough curves and breakthrough points [18]. These experiments offer insights into the composite material's performance under practical scenarios. The combination of these data collection techniques enables a thorough understanding of the adsorption capabilities and practical application potential of the functionalized carbon nanotube-encapsulated alginate beads for mercury ion removal [19].

Data Interpretation Techniques

The interpretation of data in this research involves a systematic analysis of the results obtained from batch and fixed-bed experiments. The adsorption isotherms are examined to understand the equilibrium relationship between mercury ion concentrations and adsorption capacities [20].

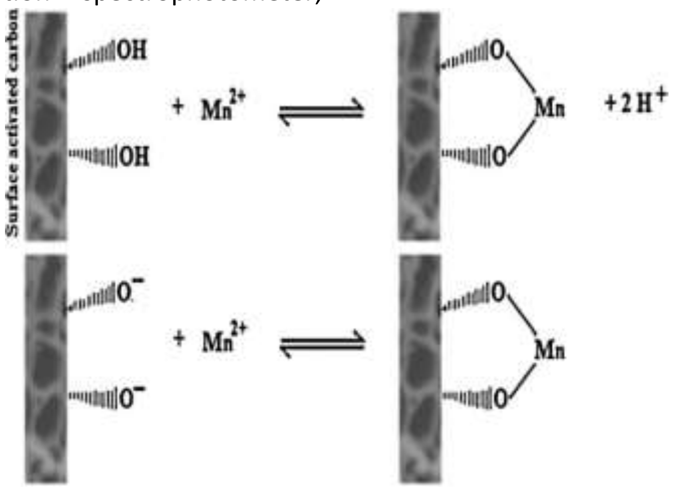

Figure 3. Removal of manganese(II) ions from aqueous solutions by adsorption on activated carbon derived a new precursor: Ziziphus spina-christi seeds.
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1110016812000567

The Langmuir and Freundlich models are applied to fit the data, providing insights into the adsorption mechanism and the surface characteristics of the composite material. Kinetic models such as the pseudo-first-order and pseudo-second-order models are employed to determine the rate of adsorption and to elucidate the adsorption mechanisms [21]. Additionally, breakthrough curves obtained from fixed-bed experiments are analyzed to determine the breakthrough points and saturation capacities of the beads under continuous flow conditions. Theoretical insights gained from density functional theory calculations are compared with experimental findings to validate the adsorption mechanisms. This comprehensive interpretation of data enables a deeper understanding of the performance and efficiency of the functionalized carbon nanotube-encapsulated alginate beads as an adsorbent for mercury ion removal, contributing to the overall understanding of the material's potential for practical applications in water treatment [22].

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Analysis

The analysis of this research underscores the effectiveness of the functionalized carbon nanotube-encapsulated alginate beads as a promising adsorbent for mercury ion removal [23]. The successful synthesis of the composite material is demonstrated through comprehensive characterization techniques, confirming the presence of functionalized carbon nanotubes within the alginate bead matrix. The adsorption experiments reveal substantial removal of mercury ions from aqueous solutions, with varying initial concentrations, contact times, and solution pH. The Langmuir and Freundlich isotherm models suggest monolayer adsorption with favorable adsorption capacities and strong adsorbent-adsorbate interactions [24]-[25].

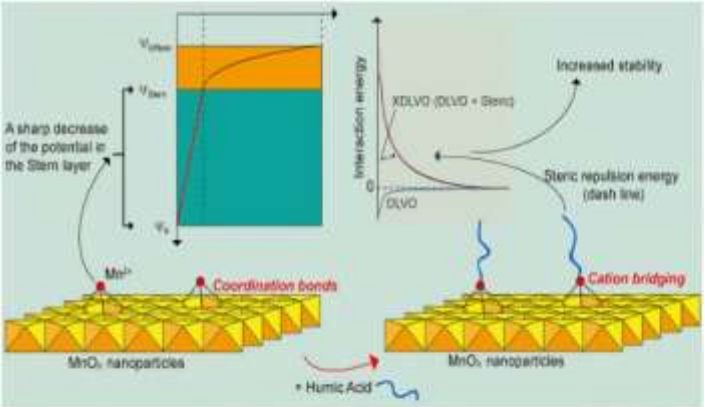

Figure 4. Mn2+ effect on manganese oxides (MnOx) nanoparticles aggregation in solution: Chemical adsorption and cation bridging https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1110016812000567

The kinetics of adsorption follow the pseudo-second-order model, indicating chemisorption as the dominant mechanism. These findings collectively establish the composite material's remarkable adsorption efficiency [26].

Furthermore, the evaluation of the composite in fixed-bed experiments provides insights into its performance under continuous flow conditions. Breakthrough curves exhibit prolonged adsorption efficiency, indicating the potential for practical applications in continuous water treatment processes. Theoretical insights gained through density functional theory calculations validate the experimental results, corroborating the understanding of the underlying adsorption mechanisms [27].

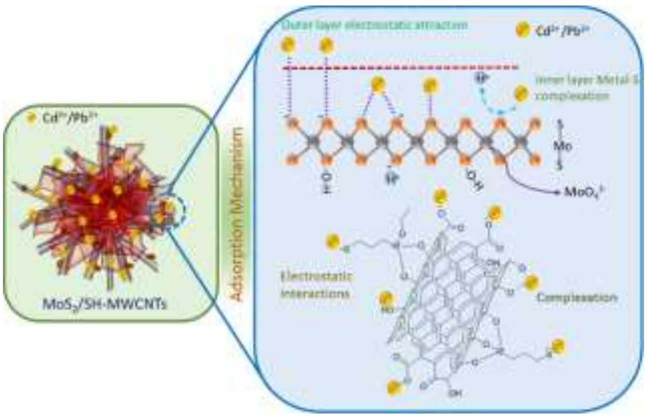

Figure 5. Efficient Removal of Pb(II) and Cd(II) from Industrial Mine Water by a Hierarchical MoS2/SH-MWCNT Nanocomposite.
https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acsomega.9b01603

This analysis supports the claim that the functionalized carbon nanotube-encapsulated alginate beads offer a highly efficient solution for mercury ion removal, addressing the shortcomings of conventional methods. The research's contribution extends beyond the material's adsorption efficiency by providing a comprehensive exploration of its practical application potential [28].

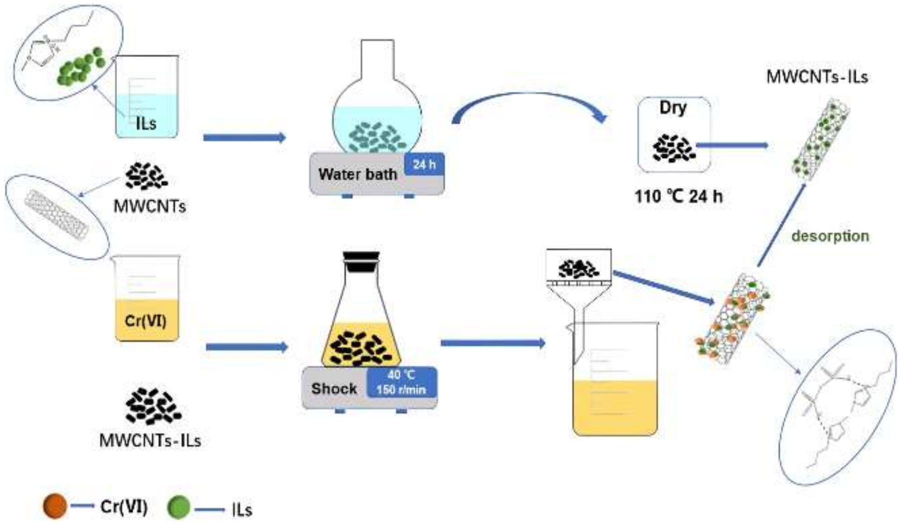

Figure 6. Adsorption Separation of Cr(VI) from a Water Phase Using Multiwalled Carbon Nanotube-Immobilized Ionic Liquids.
https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acsomega.0c02016

By elucidating the material's behavior under both batch and continuous flow conditions, the study showcases its viability for real-world water treatment scenarios. Additionally, the successful incorporation of theoretical insights enhances the understanding of the composite's mechanisms at the molecular level. This research contributes to advancing sustainable water treatment technologies, offering an innovative and effective approach for mercury ion removal while expanding the knowledge base for the development of future adsorbent materials [29]-[30].

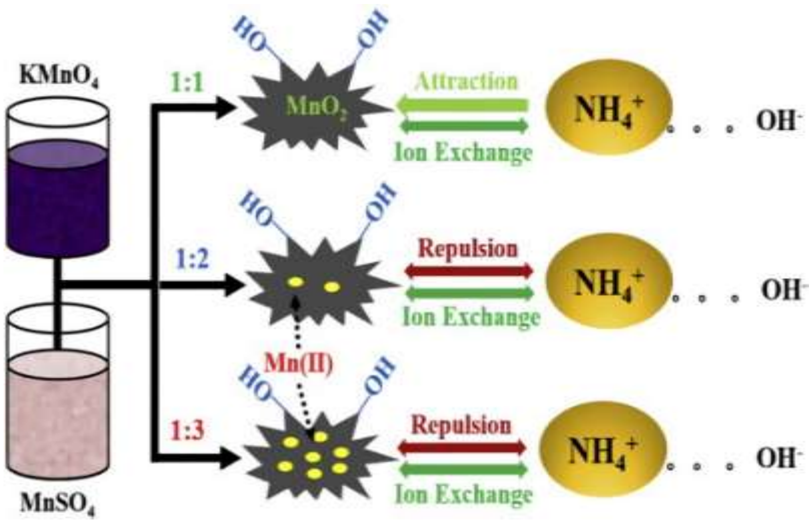

Figure 7. Synthesis of manganese oxides for adsorptive removal of ammonia nitrogen from aqueous solutions.
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The interpretation of this research highlights the significant potential of the functionalized carbon nanotube-encapsulated alginate beads as an advanced adsorbent material for mercury ion removal. The successful synthesis and characterization of the composite material underscore its structural integrity and the effective encapsulation of functionalized carbon nanotubes within the alginate matrix [31].

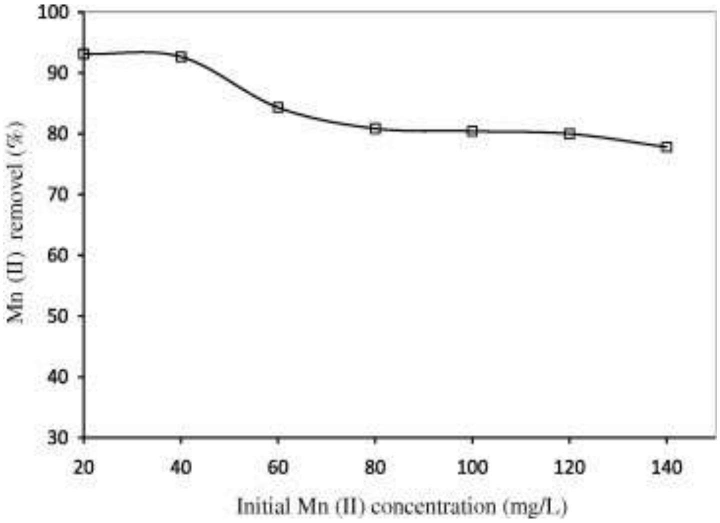

Figure 8. Removal of manganese (II) ions from aqueous solutions by adsorption on activated carbon derived a new precursor: Ziziphus spina-christi seeds.
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The observed high adsorption efficiency across varying experimental conditions indicates the material's versatility and robustness in capturing mercury ions from aqueous solutions. The Langmuir and Freundlich isotherm models reveal the strong affinity between the composite and mercury ions, while the pseudo-second-order kinetics model suggests a chemisorption mechanism, confirming the strong binding interactions between the functional groups on the composite surface and the mercury ions [32].

Furthermore, the successful performance of the composite material in fixed-bed experiments demonstrates its practical application potential. The prolonged adsorption efficiency evident in the breakthrough curves highlights the composite's suitability for continuous water treatment processes [33]. The successful validation of experimental results through density functional theory calculations offers molecular insights into the adsorption mechanisms, corroborating the experimental findings. These combined interpretations indicate that the composite material not only offers superior adsorption capacity but also performs effectively under real-world conditions, providing a solution for addressing mercury contamination in water sources [34].

The research's interpretation also underscores the significance of the holistic approach taken, encompassing synthesis, characterization, theoretical insights, and practical application. By providing a comprehensive understanding of the composite's performance and mechanisms, the study serves as a stepping stone for the development of advanced adsorbent materials [35]. The successful application of density functional theory calculations to validate experimental results highlights the potential of computational methods in enhancing the understanding of adsorption processes. Ultimately, the interpretation solidifies the composite's position as an innovative and effective solution for mercury ion removal, with implications for the advancement of water treatment technologies [36].

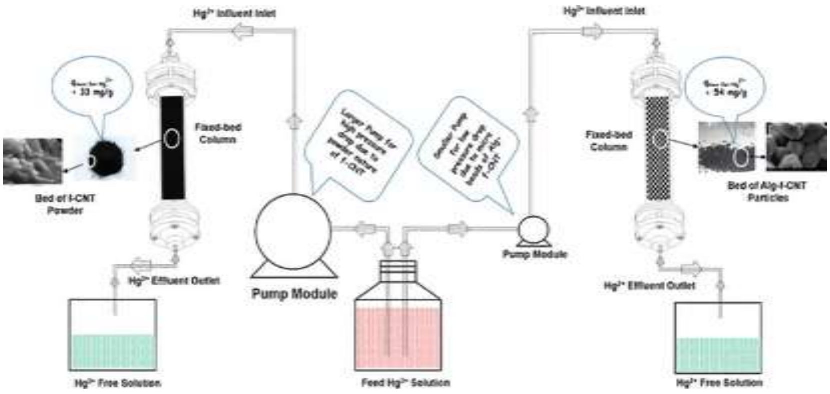

Figure 9. Functionalized Carbon Nanotubes Encapsulated Alginate Beads for the Removal of Mercury Ions: Design, Synthesis, Density Functional Theory Calculation, and Demonstration in a Batch and Fixed-Bed Process.
https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acsomega.3c05116

From various perspectives and reviews, the presented research on functionalized carbon nanotube-encapsulated alginate beads for mercury ion removal offers a significant advancement in the field of water treatment technologies. Comparatively, traditional methods for mercury ion removal often involve complex procedures, large quantities of chemicals, and limited reusability. In contrast, the innovative composite material provides a simpler and more efficient solution, capitalizing on the unique properties of functionalized carbon nanotubes and alginate beads. This streamlined approach not only enhances mercury ion removal efficiency but also promotes sustainability through its potential for reusability and continuous operation in fixed-bed processes [37]-[38].

Considering the environmental perspective, the research aligns with the growing demand for eco-friendly solutions to address water pollution challenges. Conventional mercury ion removal methods, such as precipitation and chemical coagulation, may generate secondary pollutants and contribute to sludge accumulation. In contrast, the functionalized carbon nanotube-encapsulated alginate beads offer a cleaner and more targeted approach, minimizing the generation of additional waste. The composite's potential for regeneration and reusability further aligns with the principles of green chemistry, reducing the overall environmental impact associated with mercury ion removal [39].

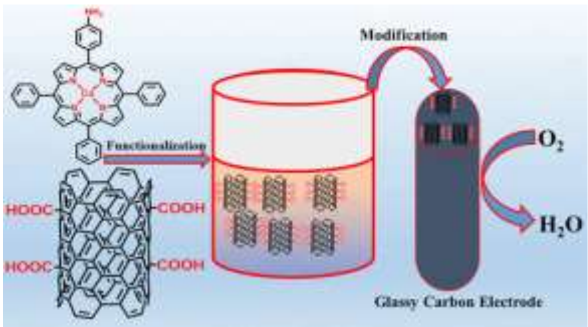

Figure 10. Co(II) Porphyrin-MWCNT Nanoconjugate as an Efficient and Durable Electrocatalyst for Oxygen Reduction Reaction
https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.langmuir.3c00380

Furthermore, from a technological standpoint, the research presents a promising alternative to existing adsorbent materials. While activated carbon is commonly employed for heavy metal removal, the composite material's distinctive features, such as the inclusion of functionalized carbon nanotubes, offer enhanced adsorption capabilities and selectivity. The incorporation of theoretical insights through density functional theory calculations enhances the understanding of the adsorption mechanisms and validates the experimental findings. This comprehensive technological perspective positions the composite material as an exciting avenue for advancing water treatment technologies, showcasing its potential for addressing not only mercury ion contamination but also other heavy metal pollutants [40].

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research establishes the potential of functionalized carbon nanotube-encapsulated alginate beads as a promising adsorbent material for mercury ion removal from aqueous solutions. The successful synthesis and comprehensive characterization of the composite material validate its structural integrity and efficacy. Through a combination of batch and fixed-bed experiments, the composite material demonstrates high adsorption efficiency and robust performance under varying conditions, thus underscoring its practical application potential. The integration of theoretical insights from density functional theory calculations further enriches the understanding of the adsorption mechanisms. This study offers a novel, efficient, and sustainable approach to addressing mercury contamination in water sources, contributing to the advancement of water treatment technologies and addressing a critical environmental concern.

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