

Question 24 (4 marks)

Assess the impact of atomic absorption spectroscopy (AAS) on the scientific understanding of the effects of trace elements.

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Before AAS commonly used analytical methods were not accurate enough to detect trace elements, as AAS can detect metal ion concentration in parts per million or even parts per billion. AAS allowed scientists to detect trace elements in living organisms and soils. This eventuated in having a huge impact on the understanding of ^{how trace} ~~the necessity~~ elements are essential to the normal functioning of an organism. ^{as} previously it wasn't really known that they existed as such small amounts are present in the body e.g. lead. Without the accurate measurement of AAS the scientific understanding of the effects of trace elements may/properly wouldn't exist.