

HealthScapades Episode #41 | pH? That Parameter Ain't Stable | 18.02.2026

by **Tayo Fasuan, PhD**

One of the most difficult things my supervisors told me to do during sample collection for my PhD was to take the pH reading in-situ. It was puzzling to me at first, but after a while, I understood why they asked me to. But not before I almost broke my back.

How? I usually prefer to dip the tip of my pH meter, which contains the pH probe, directly into the surface water to take my readings, squatting down long enough for the reading to stabilize before recording. It wasn't that I liked this method. Na condition, wey make crayfish back bend, cause am.

The mouths of the containers with which I stored my water samples were narrow, and the tip of the pH meter won't fit. So, I decided that right into the running water was where I would be dipping the meter. Well, until the day I heard that sharp "Krrrpa" as I bent down to take a reading. Jesus! My back o! But that's a story for another day.

Oh, lest I forget, in-situ means on-site.

So, my supes expected me to take the pH readings, together with the temperature readings, onsite. And I was doing that judiciously until curiosity got the better of me one day. I took another sample of water from the same source and kept it at room temperature inside my own personal laboratory till the next day. Around afternoon, I took the pH reading again, and it was different. And I understood why immediately.

Having taken the initial reading in the natural environment where the water was constantly rushing and swirling, and where the organic matters and the microorganisms that would act on them were evenly distributed, there was bound to be changes when I took that water away and put it where the temperature was now stable, and the types of microorganisms present were now stable.

The pH can never remain the same. Laelae.

With the breaking down of the organic matter, which would have been used as food by the microbes, there was bound to be change in the eventual chemical components of that water. This would invariably lead to a change in the pH of the water. It is that simple really.

So back to you that 'stores' water for a long while, either for drinking or for other uses. What you initially put there would have changed after a few days, especially if organic matters are present. The taste has changed from the first day, innit? Doesn't that remind you of 'pure water' being kept for long before being drunk? Think about it.

There goes your normal pH.

If you still don't get it, [these ResearchApp and EventRep articles attached to this HealthScapade](#), will provide you with more details. So, see you in the next episode, and welcome to the new year even if we are at February ending. Don't miss any HealthScapade in 2026.

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"pH? That Parameter Ain't Stable" is the 41st episode of *HealthScapade*, written by Tayo Fasuan, an environmental virologist and science communicator. *HealthScapades* are personal accounts of public health adventures experienced by the writer, and in this episode, he wrote about his experience concerning the pH of water and its instability. Additionally, he also provided an *EventRep* article on the pH quality of some specific canal surface water from his research, as well as a *ResearchApp* article on pH and its importance.

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