Growth rates of live *Lophelia pertusa* and *Madrepora oculata* from the Mediterranean Sea maintained in aquaria

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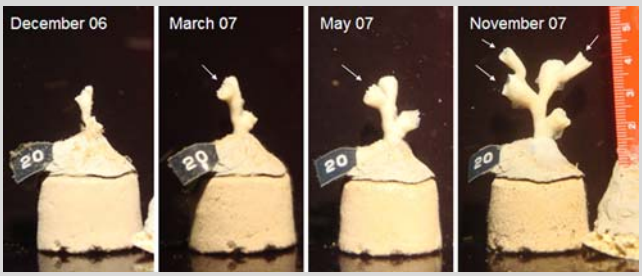

Fig. 1 Growth of *Lophelia pertusa* between December 2006 and November 2007, showing the enlargement of the polyp calyx (*arrowed*), and in November 2007 the addition of two new polyps (*arrowed*)

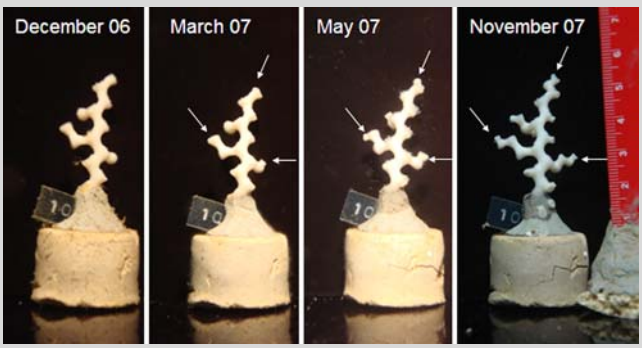

Fig. 2 Growth of *Madrepora oculata* between December 2006 and November 2007, showing the lengthening of branches (*arrowed*), new polyps and the covering of the artificial base by new tissue. Color differences in the last photograph are due to different lighting during photography

Specimens of the corals *Lophelia pertusa* (Linnaeus, 1758) and *Madrepora oculata* (Linnaeus, 1758) were collected from depths of 218 and 214 m in the Cap de Creus Canyon (42°23′23″N, 3°18′53″E; 42°23′05″N, 3°19′E), NW Mediterranean. For 15 months they were maintained in aquaria supplied with filtered natural seawater and frozen food (*Artemia* sp. and Mysidacea) once a day, under dark conditions. Water temperature varied from 11.5 to 12.5°C. During this period, the vertical linear extension of *L. pertusa* was 15–17 mm yr^{-1}, with an addition of 4 polyp yr^{-1} (Fig. 1). The extension of *M. oculata* (Fig. 2) varied between 3 and 18 mm yr^{-1}, and 5 polyp yr^{-1}. Despite the general oligotrophic Mediterranean Sea environment (~ 1 mg Chl *a* l^{-1} yr^{-1}), growth rates for both species were in the same range and in some cases higher than in situ measured rates for *L. pertusa* from the North Sea (Gass and Roberts 2006) and other deep coral species from Canadian waters (Risk et al. 2002).

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