



**22<sup>nd</sup> European Conference on Fracture - ECF22**

# **LOADING AND ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS ON STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY**

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## Working life estimate of the tubular T-joint by application of the LEFM concept

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### Abstract

The crack growth in tubular joints usually occurs along the weld's toe. That is the point where the chord and brace intersect. The semi-elliptical crack appears in this area from the initial flaw that was created during the welding. Sensitivity to fatigue depends on combination of cyclic loading, initial defects, environmental influences and the hot spot stresses, which are result of the walls' bending during the loading of a structure. The principles of the linear elastic fracture mechanics (LEFM) are applied here to crack growth in the tubular T-joint, subjected to axial load, in-plane and anti-plane bending. Influences of the level and type of loading, as well as of the joint's geometrical characteristics, on the fatigue crack propagation and consequently on the working life of the welded joint, are considered. Based on the conducted analysis, which implies a set of assumptions, one can draw sufficiently relevant conclusion on the remaining working life of the tubular T-joint. The assumptions included: the crack shape is semi-elliptical, there is only one crack propagating through the tube wall, the cyclic plastic zone at the crack tip is small with respect to other geometrical variables and the crack grows only if the difference between the stress intensity factor values at maximal and minimal loads is greater than the stress intensity factor necessary for the fatigue crack growth initiation. Results are presented in the form of diagrams from which can be seen that for the same load level the longer working life is achieved for the axial load of the joint than for the in-plane bending, while the values for the anti-plane bending lie between these two limiting results.

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*Keywords:* tubular T- joint; fatigue crack; Paris law; LEFM

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