



World strength map: preliminary results

Magdala Tesauro (1), Mikhail K. Kaban (1), Sierd A.P.L. Cloetingh (2), and Walter Mooney (3)

(1) GeoForschungsZentrum Potsdam (GFZ), (magdala@gfz-potsdam.de), (2) Vrije Universiteit, Faculty of Earth & Life Sciences, HV Amsterdam, Netherlands, (3) U.S. Geological Survey, Menlo Park, U.S.

Rheology and strength of the Earth's lithosphere have been debated since the beginning of the last century, when the concept of a strong lithosphere overlying viscous asthenosphere was introduced. The issue of strength of the lithospheric plates and their spatial and temporal variations is important for many geodynamic applications. For rocks with given mineralogical composition and microstructure, temperature is one of the most important parameters controlling rheology. We present the first world strength map obtained from global thermal and crustal models. Temperature estimates for the deeper horizons of the lithosphere, where the heat transport is mostly conductive, requires a precise knowledge of many crustal parameters (mainly thermal conductivity and heat production), which are extremely uncertain. Therefore, we use a combination of indirect approaches, such as seismic tomography and geothermal analysis. Furthermore, we implement a global crustal model on the base of previous compilations. Lithology of the upper and lower crust was classified based on tectonic maps of the World in agreement with the previous study of Tesauro et al. (2009). The results show a good correspondence between strength values and geological features. We observe some general tendency for old cratons and areas affected by the Tertiary volcanism, characterized by high and low strength values, respectively. At the same time, relevant differences in the strength distribution between similar structures are found.