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The development of HR-MAS NMR towards μg biospecimens

Alan Wong*^{†1} and Yusuke Nishiyama²

¹Laboratoire de Structure et Dynamique par Résonance Magnétique (LSDRM) – CEA-SACLAY – NIMBE, CEA, CNRS, Université Paris-Saclay, CEA Saclay 91191 Gif-sur-Yvette, France

²JEOL RESONANCE Inc. – 3-1-2 Musashino, Akishima, Tokyo 196-8558, Japan

Abstract

NMR has already proven to be a tremendous spectroscopic tool in the field of metabolomics in living specimens. Its major weakness is the low detection sensitivity that renders the analysis of microscopic quantities ($< 1\text{mg}$ -scale) impractical, time consuming and often impossible. The use of micro-size NMR detection coils is considered a cost effective approach; however, implementing a microcoil for heterogeneous biospecimens such as tissues, cells and organisms is a challenging task. This is because of the necessity of rapid sample rotation of the specimens at a specific angle, 54.74° , to the magnetic field. The technique denotes as Magic-Angle Spinning (MAS) NMR. It is commonly applied to solid materials. Depending on the diameter of the MAS detection coil, MAS can be applied to a wide range of sample mass from 500 mg with a large coil diameter 7-mm probe, to $< 1\text{mg}$ with μ -size diameter MAS probe (1-mm and 0.7-mm). However, these μ MAS probes are not applicable to metabolomic studies due to the inadequate spectral resolution (0.02 ppm). For this reason, there are no suitable μ MAS probes for metabolomic studies prior to 2014. This talk will present the ‘progress’ of the MAS developments towards metabolomics of μg specimens. It will briefly outline (i.e. sensitivity, resolution and practicality) two different μ MAS approaches: (i) using a μ -size inductively coupled resonator, High-Resolution Magic Angle Coil Spinning (HRMACS); and (ii) the use of a specially designed standalone μ MAS probe, High-Resolution micro-Magic Angle Spinning (HR μ MAS).

Keywords: HRMAS, μ MAS

*Speaker

[†]Corresponding author: alan.wong@cea.fr